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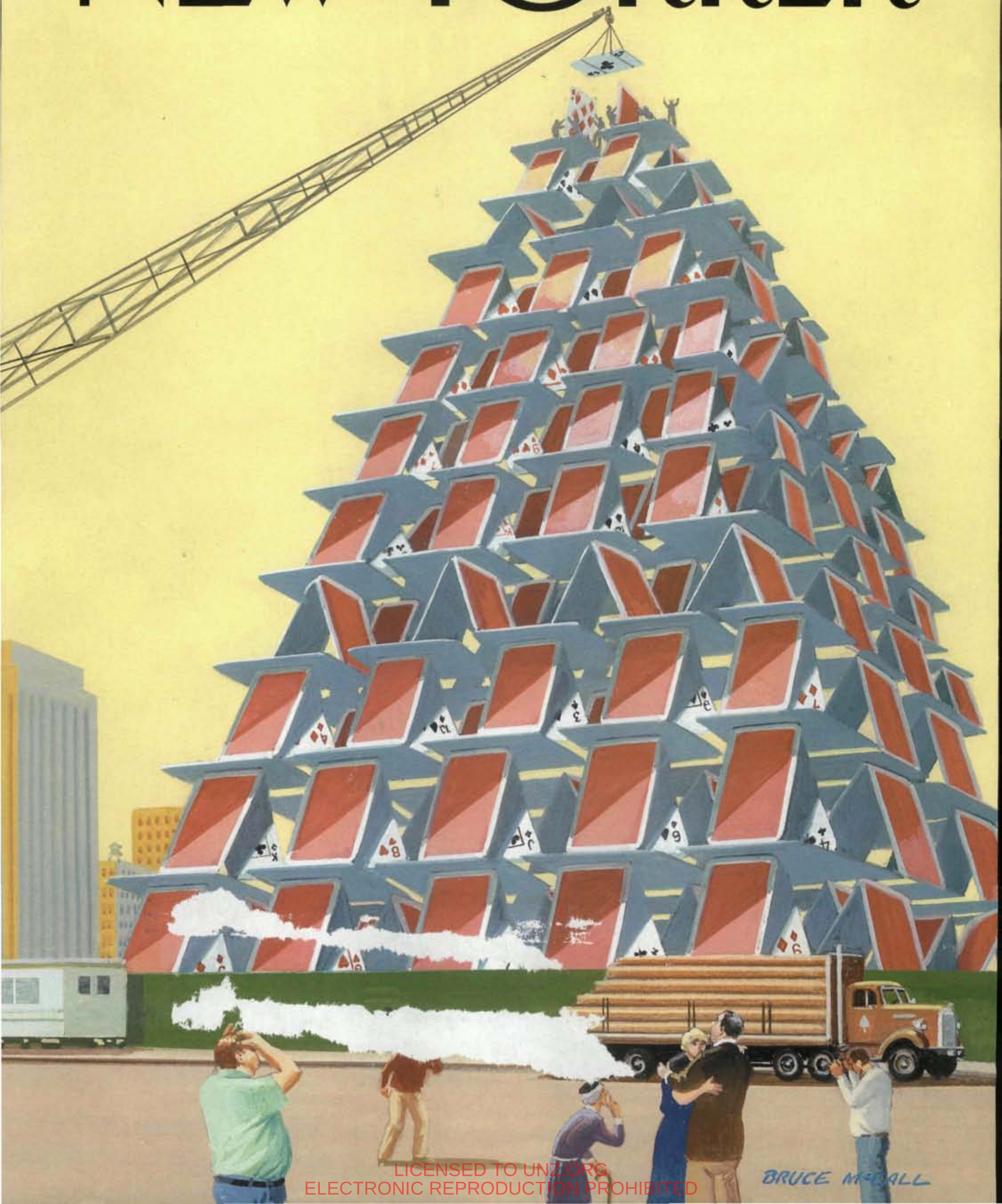
JUNE 2, 2003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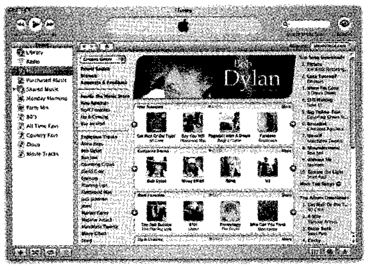

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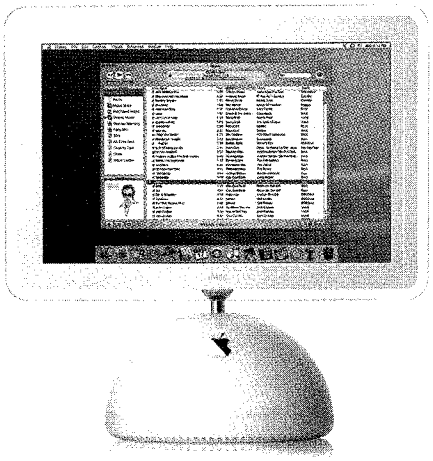

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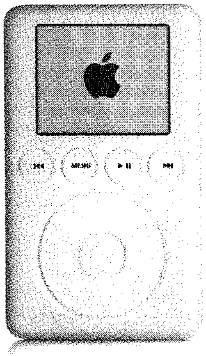

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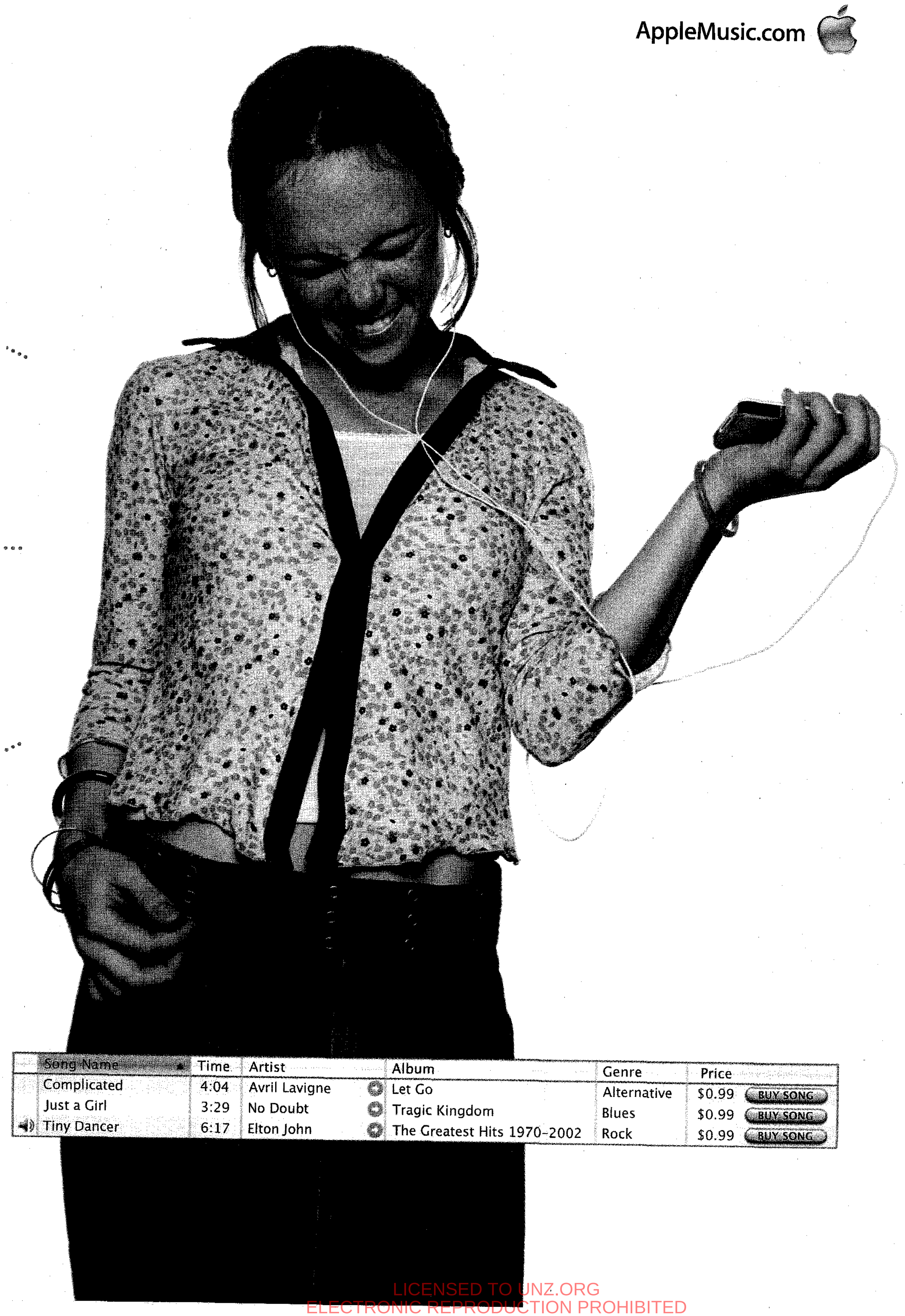

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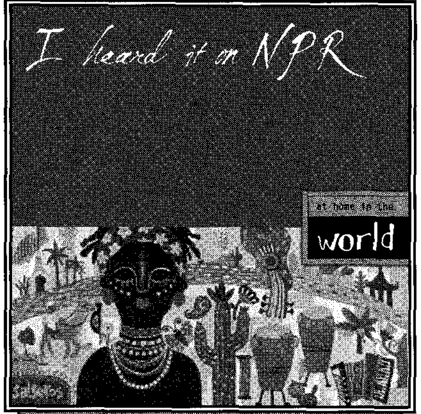

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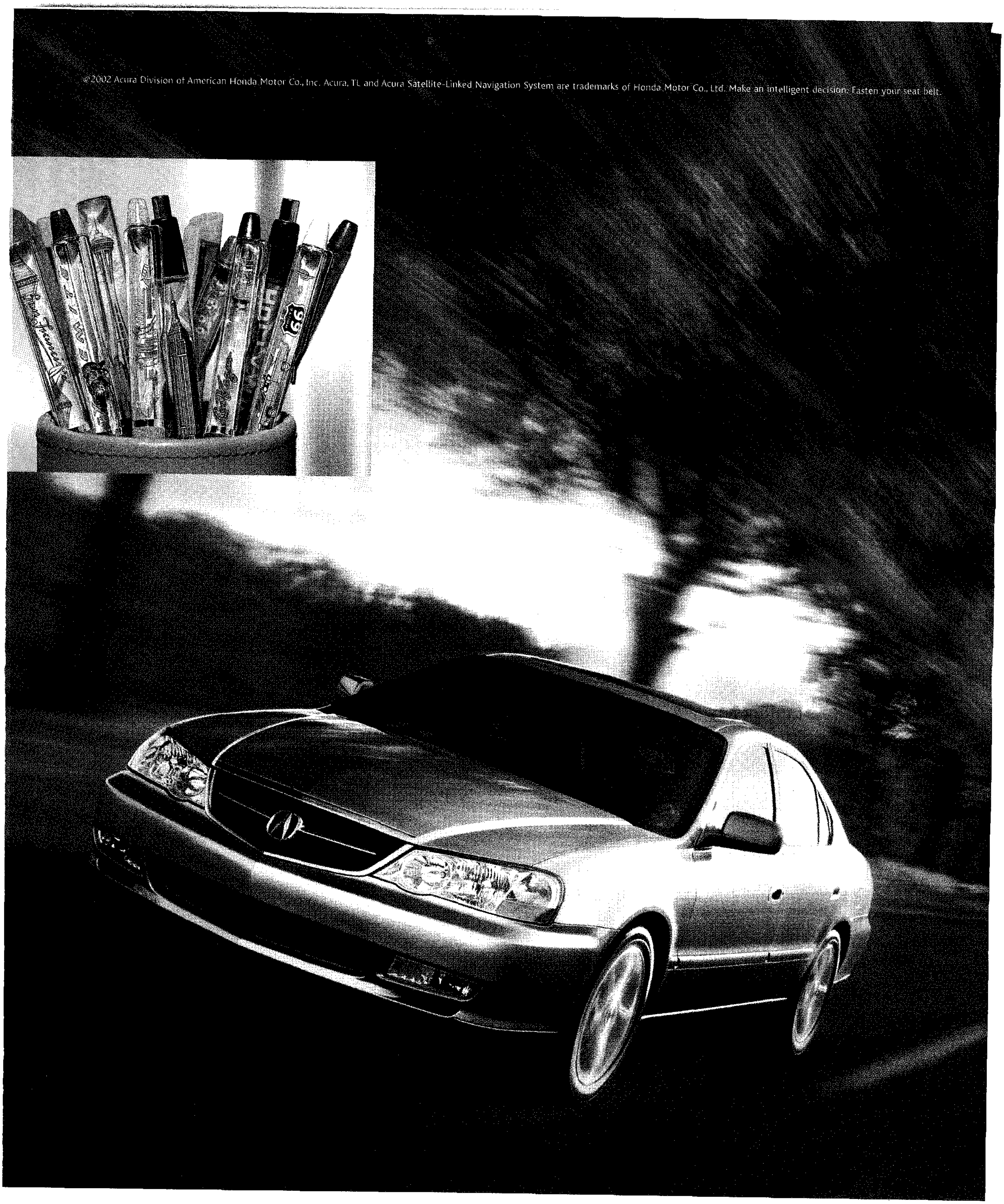

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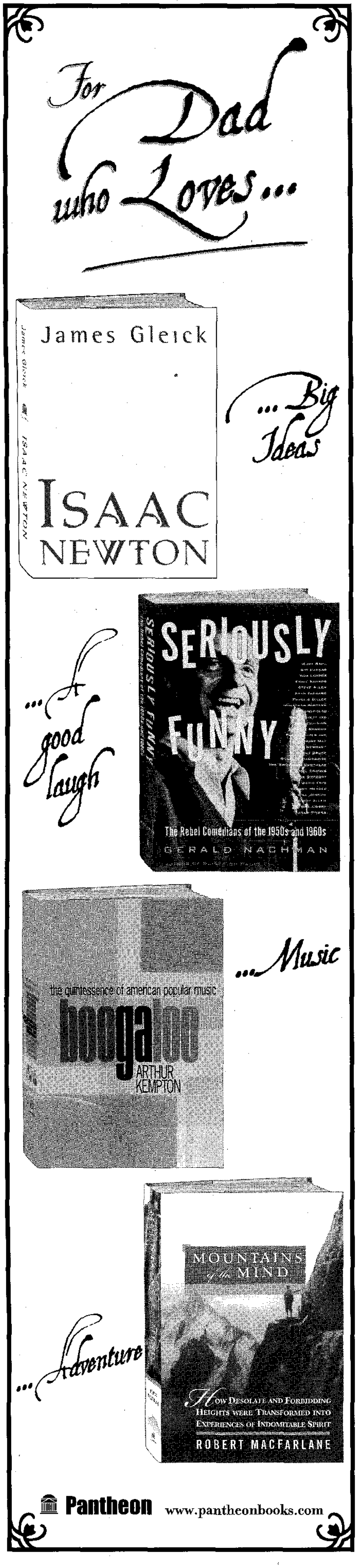
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K. C. Cole ("Fun with Physics," p. 48) is a science writer for the Los Angeles *Times.* A collection of her columns, "Mind Over Matter: Conversations with the Cosmos," was published in April.

Lucie Brock-Broido (Poem, p. 86) has a new collection of poems, "Trouble in Mind," coming out in January.

Joan Acocella (Dancing, p. 88) reviews books and dance for the magazine.

Gao Xingjian (Fiction, p. 82) received the 2000 Nobel Prize in Literature. "Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather," a collection of stories, will be published next year.

Adam Hochschild (Books, p. 93) has written five books, including "King Leopold's Ghost" and "Finding the Trapdoor."

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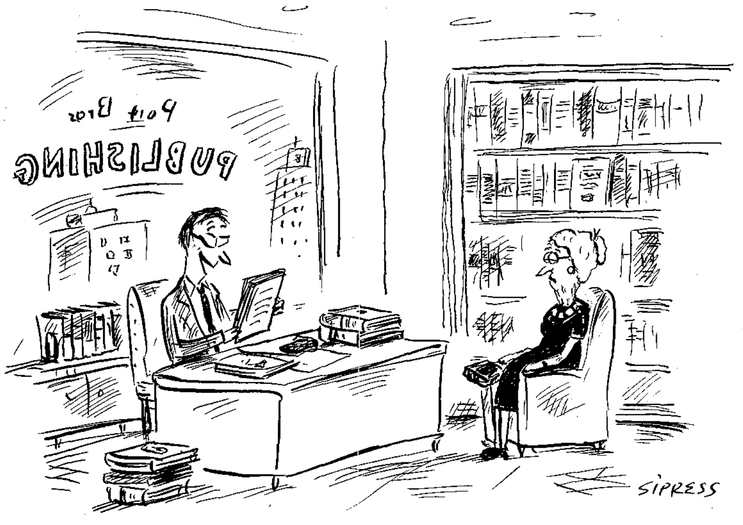
Paul Goldberger (The Sky Line, p. 99), the magazine's architecture critic, is working on a book about the rebuilding of Ground Zero.

Michael Crawford (The Back Page, p. 104) is a staff artist and a painter. He has been contributing to *The New Yorker* since 1983. ♦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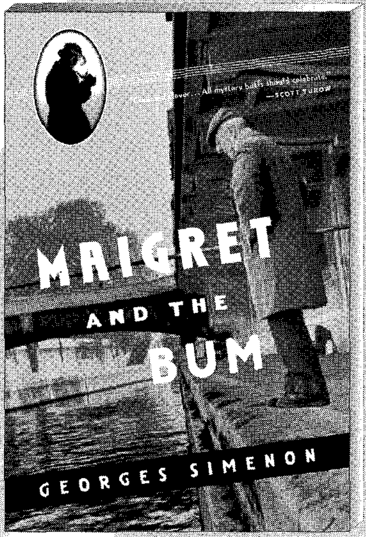
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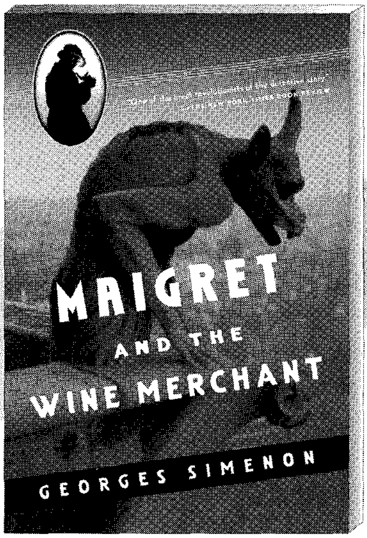
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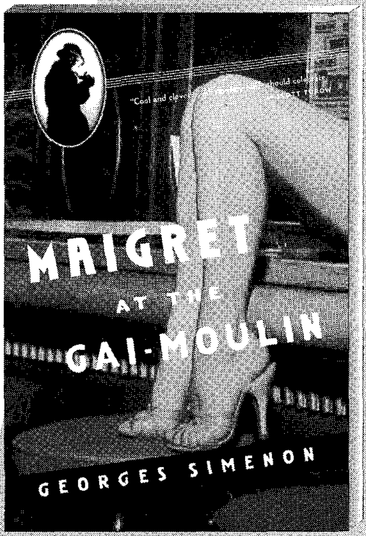
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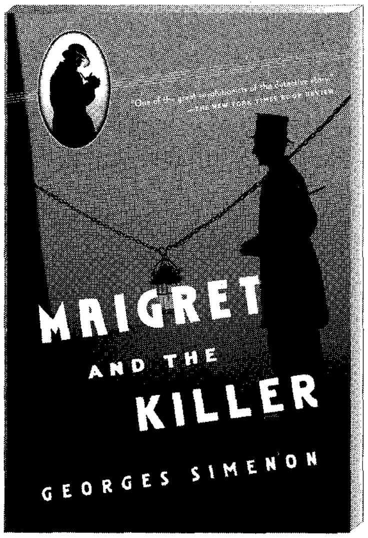
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THE PRESIDENT'S MAN

Nicholas Lemann's Profile of Karl Rove, President Bush's adviser and the mastermind of his Presidential campaign, was too kind ("The Controller," May 12th). The recent electoral successes of the Republican Party have many explanations (money, our partisan Supreme Court), but surely one component is the perfection of the last-minute smear, as in "dark suggestions that McCain had committed treason while a prisoner of war, and had fathered a child by a black prostitute." Or in equally ludicrous accusations against Max Cleland, another war hero. Cleland, a Georgia Democrat who lost two legs and an arm in Vietnam, lost the Senate election after being labelled soft on national security in a media blitz. Such a smear is easy: just make something up and keep hammering. Ordinary citizens rarely meet—and so are easily misled by—shameless liars. To some political operatives, it would seem, the only shame is in losing.

Arndt von Hippel
Anchorage, Alaska

Karl Rove tells Lemann that when he first met George W. Bush, the day before Thanksgiving in 1973, while working for Bush's father, Bush was wearing "an Air National Guard flight jacket" and "exuding more charisma than any one individual should be allowed to have." And yet by then Bush had been discharged from the Texas Air National Guard, eight months short of his original commitment, leaving behind a record of erratic attendance. Arguably, he had little more right to wear that flight jacket than did Rove himself. But perhaps it was fated that Rove meet a rich kid who had as superficial an interest in reality as he had.

John H. Flannigan
Chicago, Ill.

THREE MEN AND A BUDGET

Elizabeth Kolbert did a good job of laying bare the bleak realities of New York State's government, which are especially stark at budget time ("Accountants in the Sky," May 19th). I recall hearing a suggestion that, to save money against its twelve-billion-dollar fiscal calamity, New York might consider dropping the office of lieutenant governor. But why should we stop there? It sounds as though we could save hundreds of millions—and ultimately, perhaps, billions—if we downsized the entire legislature to the two positions that, as Kolbert writes, are the only ones with any power, the speaker of the State Assembly and the State Senate majority leader. Then, to revitalize democracy, we could require those two officials and the governor to open all their backroom conversations and debates and broadcast the entire thing on television.

Douglas K. Smith
LaGrangeville, N.Y.

THAT PHIL OCHS SONG

Adam Gopnik, in his review of Gerald Nachman's "Seriously Funny," a history of the comedians of the nineteen-fifties and sixties, writes that Mort Sahl "mumbled" (Books, May 12th). Whom could he have meant? Sahl's renowned fluency and clarity of speech are virtually unparalleled. To say that Mort Sahl mumbles is like saying that Fred Astaire stumbles.

Dick Cavett
New York City

Adam Gopnik gives credit to Tom Lehrer for "Love Me, I'm a Liberal." Actually, the song was written by my late brother, Phil Ochs, who was one of the major folk songwriters of the nineteen-sixties. Tom Lehrer wrote a bunch of wonderful songs, but not that one.

Sonny Ochs
Middleburgh, N.Y.

•

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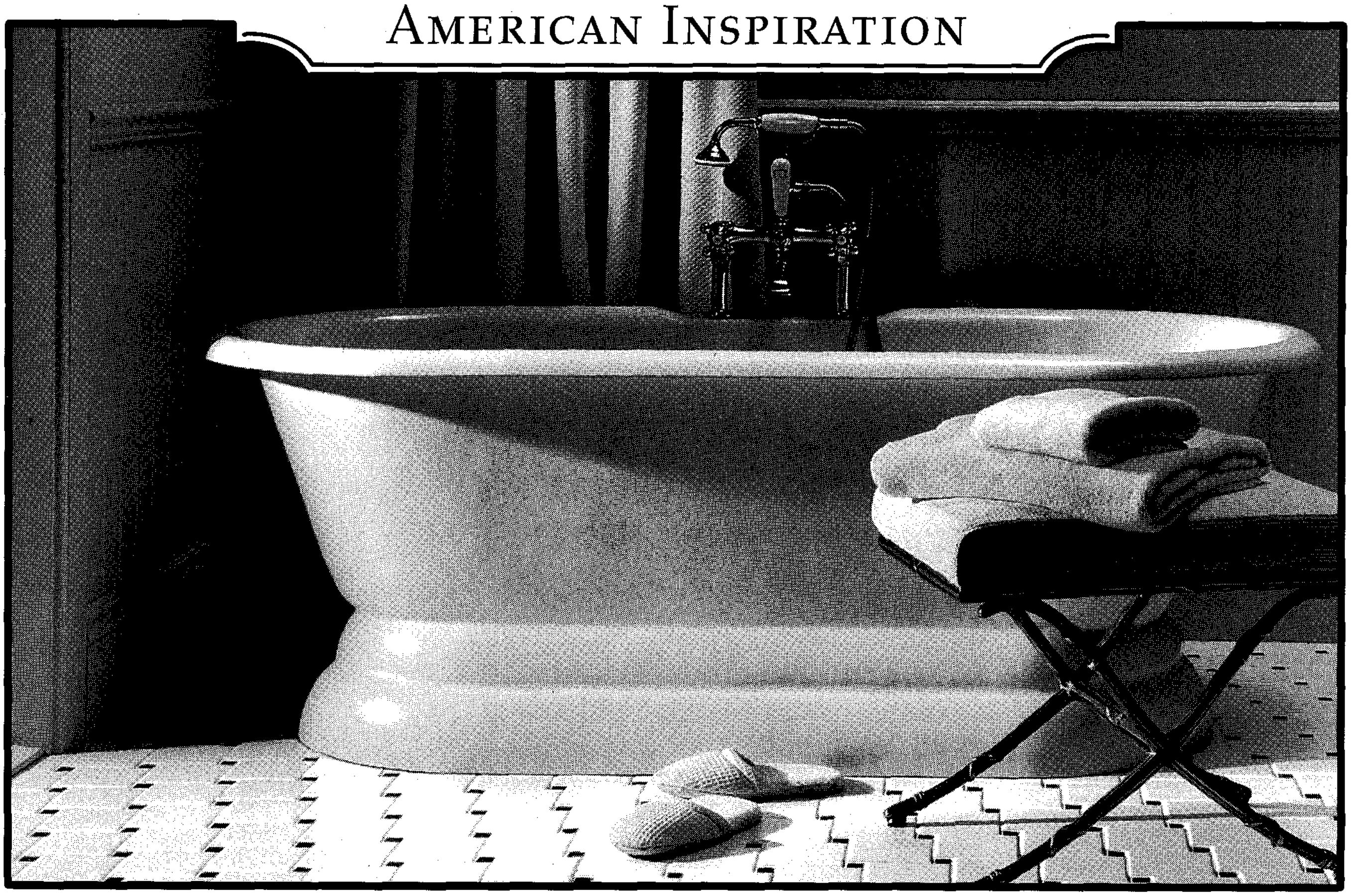

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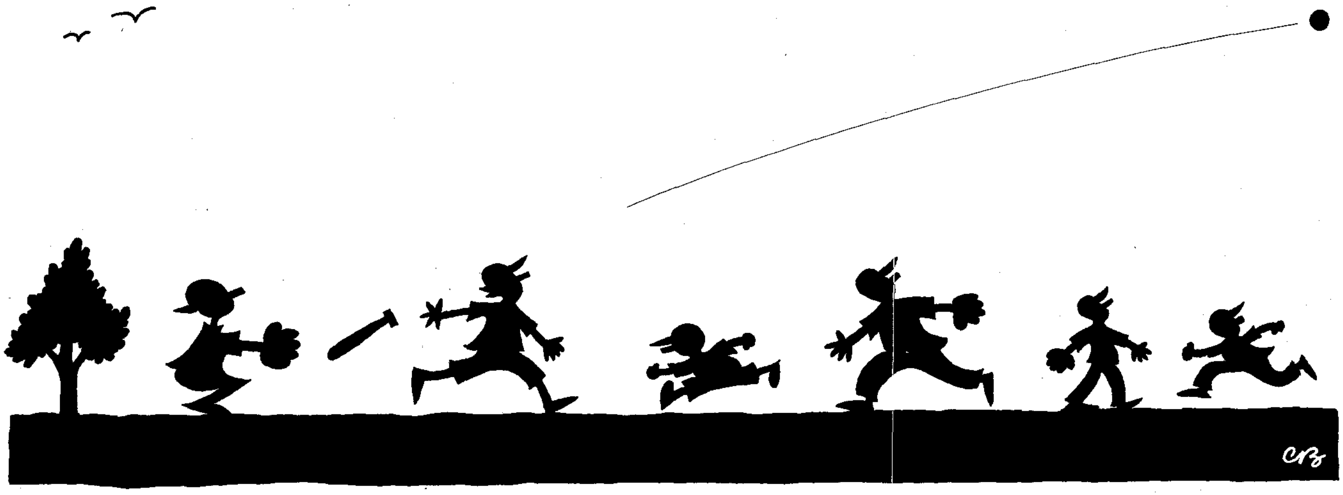

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1	2	3				

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

A BAD FRIEND
In a new play by Jules Feiffer, set during the McCarthy era, members of a Brooklyn family suffer for their Communist Party ties. Larry Bryggman, David Harbour, and Mark Feuerstein lead the cast. Directed by Jerry Zaks. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

INTRIGUE WITH FAYE
Benjamin Bratt and Julianna Margulies star in an MCC Theatre production of a new play by Kate Robin (a writer and producer for "Six Feet Under"), in which a man and a woman videotape each other's every move. Jim Simpson directs. In previews. (Acorn, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

LAST DANCE
In a new play by Marsha Norman, presented by Manhattan Theatre Club, an American poet living in the South of France is beset by hangers-on. JoBeth Williams and James Barbour lead the cast. Directed by Lynne Meadow. In previews. Opens June 3 at 7:30. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

MASTER HAROLD . . . AND THE BOYS
Danny Glover returns to Broadway in a revival of Athol Fugard's 1982 play about a white South African boy's friendship with two black servants. Directed by Lonny Price (who played the boy back in 1982). With Michael Boatman and Christopher Denham. In previews. Opens June 1 at 7. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE PERSIANS
Aeschylus' 470 B.C. play about the Persian Wars (he was a vet) has been revived by Tony Randall's National Actors Theatre in an adaptation by Ellen McLaughlin, which stars Len Cariou and Roberta Maxwell. Ethan McSweeny directs. In previews. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 212-239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

CAVEDWELLER
Kate Moira Ryan's jejune adaptation of the Dorothy Allison novel is a fairy tale of redemption in which Delia Byrd (the appealing Deirdre O'Connell), the forty-year-old former lead singer of a band called Mud Dog, goes in search of the two daughters she abandoned back in Georgia fourteen years earlier, looking to repair the damage she has caused. Under the unprobing direction of Michael Greif, the family's full emotional overhaul is accomplished in about two and a half noisy hours. What begins as the story of an emotional mess ends up a theatrical one. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/26/03.) (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200. Closes June 1.)

DOOR WIDE OPEN
Rip Torn's Sanctuary Theatre Workshop presents a new play based on the love letters exchanged by the novelist Joyce Johnson (Amy Wright) and the Beat poet Jack Kerouac (John Ventimiglia) in the nineteen-fifties. With a musical score written and performed by David Amram. Directed by Tony Torn. (Bowery Poetry Club, 308 Bowery. 212-614-0505. Through June 8.)

HUMBLE BOY
In Charlotte Jones's overprecious, melodramatic update of "Hamlet," Felix Humble (Jared Harris), a mopey, directionless thirty-five-year-old, returns to the Cotswolds upon his father's death by bee sting. There he learns that his father has been cuckolded by a neighbor, George Pye; that he himself has sired a child by the neighbor's daughter, Rosie (Ana Reeder); and that his mum, Flora (Blair Brown, in a Vivian Pickles turn), wants to remarry. Felix, in Shakespearean dudgeon, deplores the union, but in this age of divorce on demand Flora's decision to nix her romantic prospects to spare her son's feelings seems preposterous. Still, Mary Beth Hurt is hilarious as Mrs. Humble's meek friend Mercy Lott, who serves up a tainted gazpacho, and Tim Hatley's gorgeous garden set—luxuriant grasses dotted with poppies and roses, rising around an immense beehive—creates a mood of enchantment. Directed by John Caird. (Manhattan Theatre Club, City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

I AM MY OWN WIFE
Jefferson Mays stars in a new play by Doug Wright ("Quills"), directed by Moisés Kaufman, based on the life of a German transvestite named Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, who managed to avoid persecution under both Nazi and Communist regimes. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

KIKI AND HERB: COUP DE THÉÂTRE
The invention of the writer-performer Justin Bond and the pianist Kenny Mellman, Kiki and Herb have long been fixtures at downtown venues like Flamingo East, P.S. 122, and Fez. In a scorched-earth advance across decades of pop music, from Bob Merrill's "Make Yourself Comfortable" to Kylie Minogue's "Can't Get You Out of My Head," they have refined their act into a slashingly funny, psychically unsettling entertainment—part cabaret, part rock and roll, part Victorian melodrama—to which the category of camp does not apply. Directed by Scott Elliott. (5/19/03) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. between Bedford and Hudson Sts. 212-239-6200.)

KOLTÈS NEW YORK 2003
Four plays by the French writer Bernard Marie Koltès, who died of AIDS in Paris in 1989, at the age of forty-one, have been translated into English and play in repertory throughout the month of May at the Ohio Theatre. Titles include "West Pier," "Roberto Zucco," "Battle of Black and Dogs," and "In the Solitude of Cotton Fields." (66 Wooster St. 212-966-4844.)

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT
Eugene O'Neill's masterpiece has been superbly revived at the Plymouth, bringing O'Neill's own spectral, heartbroken family—"the four haunted Tyrones," he called them—to the stage. Vanessa Redgrave and Brian Dennehy play Mary and James Tyrone, and Philip Seymour Hoffman and Robert Sean Leonard are their sons, Jamie and Edmund. Since the director, Robert Falls, has chosen to stage the play uncut, there are inevitable longueurs, but no moment onstage is unexplored, and almost no choice is indulgent. Redgrave, lyrical and feral, moves like a trapped animal in a cage of her own choosing, and Dennehy, a powerhouse with a matinée idol's rugged profile, makes James's bog-Irish roots immediately credible. Hoffman's toxic sorrow, in his drunken confession of envy of his brother, kicks the play onto a completely new emotional level, and this and Mary's final aria pack an unforgettable wallop. (5/19/03) (236 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE LOOK OF LOVE
The Roundabout Theatre Company presents a song cycle masquerading as a musical that canters through twenty-nine numbers from the Hal David–Burt Bacharach easy-listening catalogue. Nine singers clamor around the high-tech parabolas of Derek McLane's set in an evening that offers no narrative, no characterization, no playfulness, no penetration, and, finally, no reason for anyone to turn up. Directed by Scott Ellis and choreographed by Ann Reinking. (5/19/03) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 212-307-4100.)

MESHUGAH
In her well-crafted adaptation of Isaac Bashevis Singer's novel about love among European émigrés in New York in the fifties, Emily Mann shows the strangeness and unexpectedness of love and the surprising contexts where it can grow. The strong five-member cast centers around Elizabeth Marvel, who gives a pitch-perfect performance as a young Holocaust survivor. In just ninety minutes, the play raises hard questions about what it means to be a victim, what compromises a person has to make to survive,

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and how hard choices resound throughout a life. Directed with charm and subtlety by Loretta Greco. (Kirk, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

MOLLY'S DREAM
Written in 1968, Maria Irene Fornes's fluid, surreal play with music has more comedy to it than much of her other work. In a new production at SoHo Rep, Molly (Bo Corre), a love-starved saloon waitress, falls asleep at the counter and dreams of a dazzling man in a white suit who enters the bar flanked by five women in transparent rain gear. As a live band plays absurd love songs and the bevy of molls sings backup, Molly and the irresistible stranger (Dominic Bogart) conduct a courtship dance of acceptance and rejection, in which Molly turns vamp, her accent thickening into a Marlene Dietrich purr. With Patrick Boll, as a manly cowboy who shoots off not just guns but Byronic poetry, and Toi Perkins, as a human Kewpie doll—all pout, tap, and wink. Directed by Daniel Aukin, with a witty new score by Maury Loeb and lyrics by Fornes. (46 Walker St. 212-868-4444. Closes June 7.)

MONDO DRAMA
The Drama Dept. presents a new comedy by Douglas Carter Beane ("As Bees in Honey Drown"), a sendup of nineteen-sixties shockumentaries that stars the standup comic and talk-show host Caroline Rhea. Directed by Christopher Ashley. (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. 212-239-6200.)

NINE
In this elegant revival of Arthur Kopit and Maury Yeston's 1982 musical—an adaptation of Fellini's "8½"—Antonio Banderas plays Guido Contini, a film director whose genius is inextricable from his childlike narcissism. Good-looking, confident, and amusing, Banderas has a European restraint that only magnifies his passionate nature. He doesn't have to strain to make the audience believe that he is catnip to women. He also has a fine voice. The other characters are satellites around Planet Guido: his put-upon wife (Mary Stuart Masterson), his battle-axe producer (Chita Rivera), and his tenacious and lubricious mistress, Carla (Jane Krakowski), who descends semi-nude from the rafters. Directed by David Leveaux. (4/21 & 28/03) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.)

RAIN DANCE
The Signature's otherwise welcome Lanford Wilson season ends with a lacklustre finale. In 1945, three Los Alamos scientists and a Native American man sit around a table chewing the cud of memory on the eve of the first A-bomb tests. As a metaphor of the sacred and the profane, it's labored and lame, and, sad to say, the casting of James Van Der Beek, a veteran of TV's "Dawson's Creek," as a brilliant young scientist with a penchant for philosophical rumination beggars the imagination. Guy Sanville directs. (Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. 212-244-7529.)

ROMOLA AND NIJINSKY
In Lynne Alvarez's play about an unusual courtship and its aftermath, Romola loves Nijinsky and Nijinsky loves love. He also loves Tolstoy and Russia and Diaghilev and God, but above all, he loves dance, and when he sees that his Hungarian bride, Romola de Pulsky (Kelly Hutchinson)—a member of the corps of the Ballets Russes—will never pull off a plié like Pavlova's, he breaks down completely. Directed by David Levine, with imaginative choreography by Robert La Fosse. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 212-333-4052. Closes June 1.)

WRITER'S BLOCK
In "Riverside Drive," the better of two new one-act plays by Woody Allen, a homeless man (Skipp Sudduth) accosts a self-absorbed screenwriter (Paul Reiser) as he fidgets on a bench by the Hudson, awaiting his mistress. When she arrives and attempts blackmail, the homeless man suggests murder. "She's a human being," the screenwriter protests. "You say that like it's a good thing," the bum responds. In the second play, "Old Saybrook," a farce about infidelity, a couple drops by a Connecticut house and gets drawn into its tenants' comic slipstream of sexual confession and accusation. A bound-and-gagged playwright then appears, who turns out to have conceived them all. This may be Allen's idea of a coup de théâtre, but unfortunately it's more of a coup de grâce. (5/26/03) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

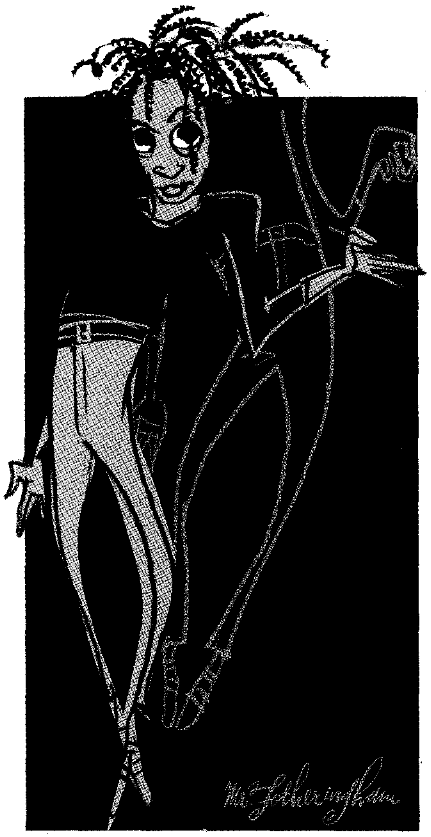
LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.

BARBRA'S WEDDING
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200. (Closes June 18.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 212-307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 212-254-4370.



BACK TO THE WELL *The singer formerly known as Terence Trent D'Arby has a different name than in his eighties heyday—he's now known as Sananda Maitreya—but the same sound: he still draws on rock, soul, and funk music, and his vocals are as distinctive as ever, whether he's dipping down for Wilson Pickett–style grit or leaping into a Princely falsetto. He has a new album, "Wildcard!," and he performs this week at the B. B. King Blues Club & Grill.*

LA BOHÈME
Broadway, Broadway at 53rd St. 212-239-6200.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 212-239-6200.

CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

A DAY IN THE DEATH OF JOE EGG
American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300. (Closes June 1.)

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 212-239-6200.

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM
Village, 158 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.

ENCHANTED APRIL
Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

THE EXONERATED
45 Bleecker Street Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

GOLDA'S BALCONY
Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. 212-239-6200.

GYPSY
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

THE LAST SUNDAY IN JUNE
Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.

LIFE (X) 3
Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 212-239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 212-307-4100.

MAMMA MIA!
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.

MAN OF LA MANCHA
Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

MOVIN' OUT
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 212-307-4100.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

THE PLAY WHAT I WROTE
Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 212-921-8000.

SALOME
Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.

SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 212-477-2477.

TAKE ME OUT
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.

TEA AT FIVE
Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 212-239-6200.

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 212-307-4100.

TRUMBO
West Side, 407 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200. (Mondays only. Closes June 16.)

URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 212-239-6200.

A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD
Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 212-239-6200.

ZANNA, DON'T!
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
On the heels of the première of his family-friendly ballet "Carnival of the Animals," a project he compares to working on "one long, giant ice cream sundae," Christopher Wheeldon has created a new abstract duet, "Liturgy," set to Arvo Pärt's hauntingly minimalist "Fratres" and danced by Jock Soto and Wendy Whelan. ♦ May 28 at 8: "Square Dance," "Morphoses," and "Who Cares?" ♦ May 29 at 8: "Coppélia." ♦ May 30 at 8 (an all-American program): "Circle of Fifths," "Ives, Songs," and "Who Cares?" ♦ May 31 at 2: "Square Dance," "Circle of Fifths," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." ♦ May 31 at 8: "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Tarantella," "In the Night," "Liturgy," and "Symphonic Dances." ♦ June 1 at 3: "Concerto Barocco," "Sonatas and Interludes," "In the Night," and "Vienna Waltzes." ♦ June 3 at 7:30: "Interplay," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Vespro," and

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"Vienna Waltzes." (New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center. 212-870-5570. Through June 29.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
A.B.T.'s extravagantly characterful pairs get to show off the chemistry and grace they can achieve à deux in three evening-length story ballets this week: one humorous ("La Fille Mal Gardée"), one passionate ("Romeo and Juliet"), and one grandiose ("Don Quixote"). For a final burst of pathos, Julio Bocca dances the last two performances of his career as Romeo on Thursday and Saturday evening, with Alessandra Ferri as his Juliet. ♦ May 28 at 2 and 8: "La Fille Mal Gardée." ♦ May 29-30 at 8 and May 31 at 2 and 8: "Romeo and Juliet." ♦ June 2-3 at 8: "Don Quixote." (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000. Through June 28.)

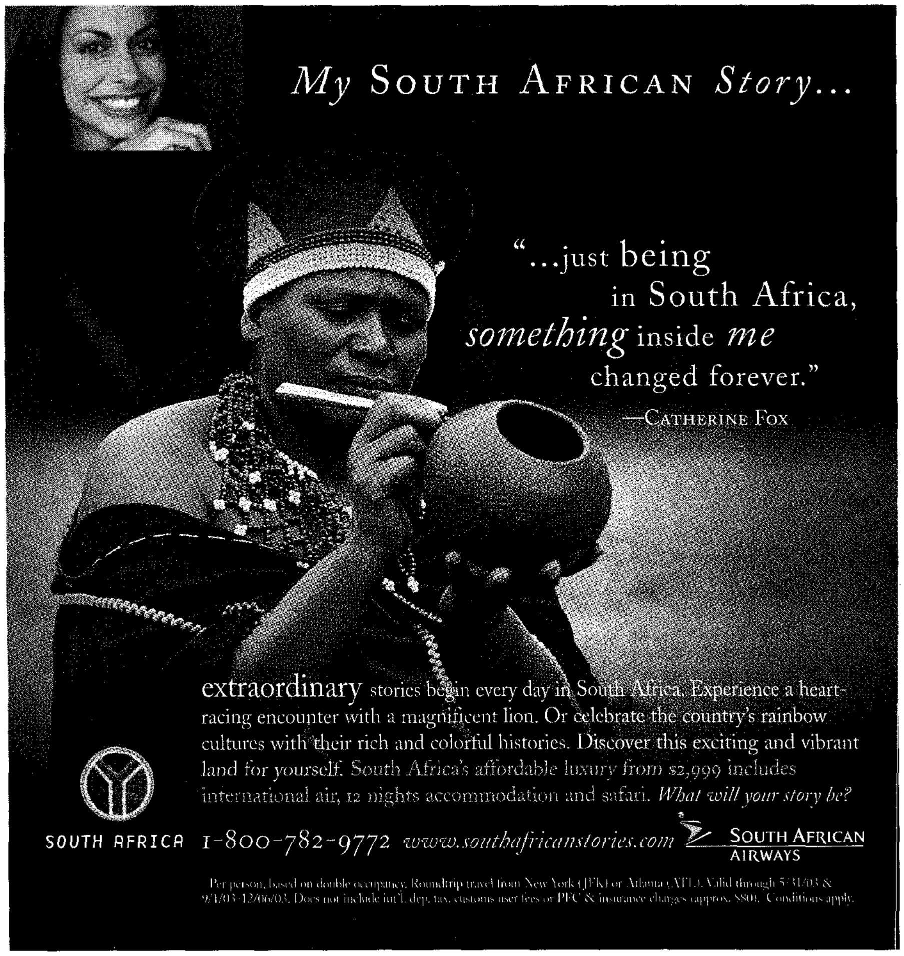
HUBBARD STREET DANCE CHICAGO
Long known for plucky jazz numbers and an association with Twyla Tharp, this twenty-five-year-old Great Lakes company has lately been adding work by transatlantic composers to its repertory—Jirí Kilián, Nacho Duato, and Ohad Naharin—reflecting the European career of the troupe's new director, Jim Vincent. In two typically eclectic programs at the Joyce, Kilián's "No More Play," a stark postmodern ballet set to an Anton Webern score, jostles with "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," Harrison McEldowney's jazz duet set to Gershwin songs; one program ends with music by Bach, the other with music by Beck. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. 212-242-0800. May 27-30 and June 3 at 8, May 31 at 2 and 8, and June 1 at 2 and 7:30. Through June 8.)

JOHN JASPERSE COMPANY
Jasperse and Juliette Mapp perform the suspenseful evening-length work "Just Two Dancers" for a second week. (Bessie Schönberg Theatre, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. May 29-June 1 at 7. Through June 8.)

"FRESH TRACKS"
Ann Liv Young's madcap choreography mocks strip-club routines, cheerleading, and feminine demureness with dancers who know how to flout the male gaze while flaunting their stuff. This week, only days after her college graduation, Young presents "American Crane Standards" as part of Dance Theatre Workshop's "Fresh Tracks" showcase of up-and-coming choreographers. Two women in mint-green skirts and chiffon blouses lug parti-colored toilets onto the stage and undertake a synchronized dance, responding to verbal cues barked from offstage. The toilets, pink, green, and yellow, coördinate perfectly with the deadpan dames who straddle them, performing midair splits. Endlessly inventive, tacitly confrontational, the show is as fun to discuss as it is to watch. The evening also features work by Jennifer Allen, Ayo Janeen Jackson, Paz Tanjuaquio, Brinsley Evans, and Nicholas Duran. (Bessie Schönberg Theatre, 219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. May 27 and June 3 at 7.)

H. T. CHEN AND DANCERS
The Chinatown-based modern-dance company celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary with a two-week season at La Mama, featuring a revival of the 1993 piece "Opening the Gate," the première of a new work, "The Vanishing," set to a commissioned score by Ushio Torikai (performed live), and a documentary about the company's history. (74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. May 29-31 at 7:30 and June 1 at 2:30. Through June 8.)

BILL T. JONES/ARNIE ZANE
As the culmination of his company's residency at Aaron Davis Hall, Jones presents "Another Evening," a collection of rehearsed and impromptu works thrown together in the spirit of a Cunningham "event." "Mercy 10 x 8 on a Circle," a work in progress, features duets set to recordings of Beethoven variations played by Glenn Gould. In another piece, Cassandra Wilson contributes her smoky contralto and five of her own songs, and Jones just may sing, too. The Wilson-Jones collaboration is intriguing and risky: her understated, assured improvisation meets his in-your-face energy. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 212-650-7100. May 30-31 at 8 and June 1 at 3.)



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KOREAN DANCE WEEK
Poet's Den, a new theatre in Spanish Harlem, kicks off its inaugural season with a series of traditional dances from the Philippines, the Middle East, Spain, and, this week, Korea. On Friday, Myung Sook Chun demonstrates a pre-Buddhist shamanistic dance, making tiny movements intended to drive away evil spirits. Six of her disciples then beat five-foot-high ceremonial drums and bend backward, introducing a popular anthem that pleads for reunification of North and South Korea and is sung here by children. (309 E. 108th St. 212-427-1445. May 29-31 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER
The compositions of the late drummer James Black are even more obscure than Black himself, a New Orleans legend who surfaced during the sixties on a smattering of albums, mainly by Yusef Lateef. But to his Crescent City homeboys, Black's tunes are a secret treasure trove just begging to be plundered. A small band featuring a pair of Marsalises—the pianist Ellis (a former band-mate of Black's) and his trumpeter son, Wynton—presents the case for the drummer's neglected work. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building. 212-721-6500. May 27-31 at 8.)

"GREAT AMERICAN COWBOY CONCERT"
Practice is not the only way to get to Carnegie Hall—apparently, the fabled venue is now accessible by horseback. Perhaps the largest gathering of cowhand musicians in the hall's history, this evening features the Prairie Rose Wranglers, the Sons of the San Joaquin, the buckaroo poet and humorist Waddie Mitchell, Roy Rogers, Jr., and many, many others. (212-247-7800. May 30 at 8.)

"LOST JAZZ SHRINES"
The tribute to the landmark Café Society continues with the pianists Joanne Brackeen, Bertha Hope, and Francesca Tansksley, performing the undervalued music of the unclassifiable Mary Lou Williams. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 212-220-1460. May 30 at 8.)

"KLEZMER EN BUENOS AIRES"
The Argentinean musicians Cesar Lerner (accordion, piano) and Marcelo Moguilevsky (clarinet, Andean pipes) combine the music of their Jewish heritage with styles from their native land. (Center for Jewish History, 15 W. 16th St. 917-606-8200. May 31 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—May 28: Roots reggae with **Israel Vibration.** The opening act is the **Easy Star All-Stars,** who will be performing songs from one of this year's more inspired projects, "Dub Side of the Moon," a reggae version of the seminal Pink Floyd album "Dark Side of the Moon." May 29: Sananda Maitreya, the singer better known as **Terence Trent D'Arby.** June 3: The **Yardbirds.** The blues-crazed British Invasion juggernaut that spawned three legendary guitarists—Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, and Jimmy Page—had collapsed by the tail end of the sixties. The band's fate seemed truly sealed in 1976, when the lead singer, Keith Relf, electrocuted himself by playing the electric guitar while in the bathtub, but the founding players Chris Dreja and Jim McCarty have recently enlisted new members for a new album, "Birdland," featuring guest turns by Beck and such contemporary guitar gods as Joe Satriani, Steve Vai, and Brian May.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—May 29: Scott Herren, who records under the name of **Prefuse 73,** chops up samples to create a kind of hip-hop that relies less on verbal dexterity and more on texture, beats, and vocal interjections. With the dreamy electronica of **Four Tet.** May 30: The fiercely indepen-

TABLES FOR TWO

TASTE
1411 Third Ave., at 80th St. (212-717-9798)—Forget the first impression: Taste is a deli by day, filled with strollers and salad eaters and cappuccino sippers. At three, the place shuts down for a few casual changes (tables get flowers and tablecloths, the bar gets chip baskets) and returns at six as a fine-dining option for a largely local crowd. If you're in a dressy mood, the whole thing can seem like a letdown at first, but have a handful of the house-made chips, take a flier on some wine by the glass—say, the crisp New Mexico champagne—and uncharitable thoughts disappear. Eli Zabar's marriage of wine store and greengrocer has produced a comfy market-menu restaurant with a sophistication that sneaks up on you.

With everything that's available to him, the chef, Scott Bieber, is right to keep things simple: the rooftop-tomato salad, sliced and salted, from Zabar's second-floor greenhouse, tastes as good as roadstand tomatoes in August. The baby-spinach salad is positively newborn. This elemental presentation of the food encourages the matchmaking of friend and vegetable, and sure enough, on a return visit, the chef devised a special onion lover's menu of charred-cipollini-onion salad, buttermilk-batter onion rings, and a rack of lamb with Vidalia-onion pudding. Of course, the willful onion lover traded the lamb for the aged rib-eye steak, the house specialty, which is suitable in size for a Diamond Jim Brady.

Taste has a wine merchant, Jonathan Laufer from the store next door, who has put together a remarkable list of out-of-the-way wines by the glass (Weininger Grüner Veltliner, Muga Rioja, Woop Woop Shiraz) that he will pair with the food, course by course. On both visits, Dorothy Czub, a waitress with a hey-hon manner and the savvy of a river guide, laid out the best paths through the menu and even dropped by after the dessert (a lemon-meringue cake that looked like Madame de Pompadour) with a bag of candied grapefruit that extended the nosh-fest through the cab ride home. (Open daily for deli and dinner. Entrées $19-$35.)

—*Kevin Conley*

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dent neo-folkie **Michelle Shocked.** June 2: The **Raveonettes** are an eccentric Danish duo who practice a creepy brand of indie rock that adheres to strict rules: all songs are in B-flat minor, with no more than three chords and running no longer than three minutes. The end results can be both captivating and mind-numbing. June 3: **Rooney** is a young and earnest Los Angeles fivesome with a big-label deal and a big, but ultimately empty, modern-rock sound.

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (212-533-7000)—May 30-31: The local alternative-country singer and radio d.j. **Laura Cantrell.** June 3: The earthy singer-songwriter **Taylor Barton** is joined by **GE Smith,** her blues-guitar-wielding husband and the former bandleader on "Saturday Night Live," and other downtown musician friends for a night of prime-time-ready adult pop. The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—May 31: The wide-ranging jazz-funk ensemble **Garage à Trois** features the custom-built, eight-string guitar work of Charlie Hunter, the hip-shaking drumming of the tireless Big Easy mainstay Stanton Moore, the rambling saxophone playing of Skerik, and the timely percussion of Mike Dillon. June 3-4: The meticulous Grateful Dead cover band **Dark Star Orchestra.**

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—After leaving the seminal country-punk trio Uncle Tupelo some seven years ago and spending the time kicking around with his group Son Volt, the singer and guitarist **Jay Far-**

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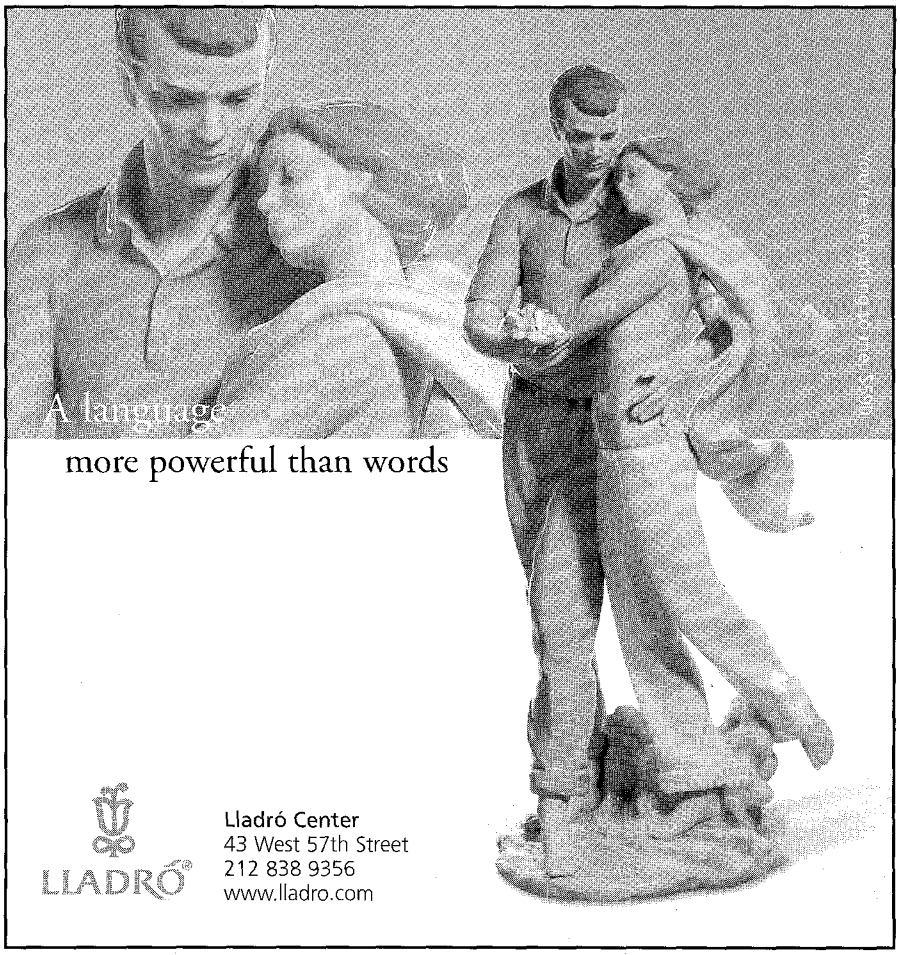

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A hand-painted photograph of Maharana Bhopal Singh at Sepia (see Photography).

rar has since spun himself a small solo career. The alt-country veteran gets down and dirty—in a lonesome and acoustic fashion—on his forthcoming album, "Terroir Blues." He appears here on May 28 backed by the guitarist **Mark Spencer,** of the Blood Oranges. May 30: **Marcia Ball** is a long-legged blues pianist and vocalist from Austin, Texas, whose keyboard playing strides east into the funky bayous of Louisiana. Her rollicking swamp rock arrives just in time to heat things up for summer.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—May 31: The Denver foursome **Dressy Bessy** cranks out feel-good pop rooted in the AM-radio sound of the sixties. It's the stuff of fuzzy guitars, shimmering vocals (delivered with glee by Tammy Ealom), and sweetly innocent lyrics. June 1: **Nina Nastasia,** a singer-songwriter with a dark, dark sensibility, has a voice that's the very sound of abandonment. On her latest album, "Run to Ruin," a cello, accordion, and acoustic bass help create a march-to-the-gallows atmosphere as she slowly limns sparse tales of tattered lives.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—May 30-31: The No Wave epic hero and experimental musician **Arto Lindsay** celebrates his fiftieth birthday.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745)—May 31: **Clarence (Gatemouth) Brown.** He's close to eighty, but you'd never know it from his sinewy sound. Like virtually every other Texas blues guitarist of the past half-century, he owes much to T-Bone Walker, but, unlike his fellow-disciples, he's always sought to expand the vocabulary of the form, mixing in elements of country, Cajun, and jazz.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080)—Elegant bop piano work and delightful vocalizing make **Barbara Carroll** an urban gem. On May 28 she gets to shine in a proper jazz-club setting. May 29-31: The **Ron Carter** nonet. The world's most famous jazz bassist began musical life as a cellist, and he's never lost his taste for that compact instrument. Carter's string-heavy nonet—heard on the recent album "Eight Plus"—surrounds his high-pitched piccolo bass with four cellos. If there's another band like this, they're keeping a mighty low profile. Dining.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through June 1: The Canadian vocalist **Michael Bublé** makes his New York City début.

BOTTOM LINE
15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (212-228-6300)—May 29-31: The **Mike Stern** band. Is Stern a fusion guitarist with serious bop chops or a bebopper unafraid to crank it up and get nasty? The question becomes irrelevant as soon as Stern launches into one of his speedy genre-colliding solos. His blue-chip rhythm section includes electric-bass whiz **Victor Wooten** and the drummer **Dennis Chambers.**

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and the irrepressible **Bobby Short,** who is celebrating his thirty-fifth year there. On Mondays the café is home to **Woody Allen** and the **Eddie Davis New Orleans Jazz Band.** ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Loston Harris** is in attendance.

DANNY'S
346 W. 46th St. (212-265-8133)—Saturdays and Sundays: Fifty years ago, no one sounded like **Blossom Dearie,** and no one sounds like her today, except, miraculously, Dearie herself, who has retained the dew-on-the-grass freshness of her crystalline voice.

FEINSTEIN'S AT THE REGENCY
540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-339-4095)—Through June 21: **Bucky Pizzarelli,** the dean of mainstream jazz guitar, joins members of his talented clan, including **John,** the noted guitarist and singer, and his daughter-in-law **Jessica Molaskey,** a charming vocalist.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—**Billy Cobham's** 1973 album, "Spectrum," is one of the precious few fusion recordings that have stood the test of time. Recognizing this, the drummer has assembled a band called New Spectrum (here through June 1), which will attempt to bring the album's music to life even without two of the major contributors: the keyboardist Jan Hammer and the late guitarist Tommy Bolin. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (212-242-1063)—May 30: The **Jimmy Greene** quartet. Greene, a no-nonsense neo-bop tenor saxophonist whose conviction helps him stand out in the crowd, has enjoyed the benefit of playing with two fine role models—the hard-bop architect Horace Silver and the valiant trumpeter Tom Harrell. May 31: An altoist with a sound that could reduce bricks to rubble, **Rudresh Mahanthappa** has played to thrilling effect with the pianist Vijay Iyer. Here, the saxophonist steps out with his own new-jazz quartet.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—**Cyrus Chestnut** (here with his trio through June 1) has a forthcoming album, "You Are My Sunshine," that casts plenty of light on the gospel strains that have always enriched his spirited piano playing. A rash of new keyboard stylists have hit the scene since Chestnut's own arrival more than a decade ago, but this vigorously graceful player should never be taken for granted. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—Through June 1: The **Lou Donaldson** quartet. The alto saxophonist Donaldson is a brilliant bop player ever ready to tangle with his marvellous organ player, **Dr. Lonnie Smith.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—The Costume Institute is throwing a glamorous toga party called **"Goddess,"** which will include appearances by Jacqueline Kennedy and Jennifer Lopez (or at least their gowns, by Valentino and Chanel, respectively). In the early nineteenth century, the Greco-Roman look was popular; judging from a group of prints here the effect was more "Middlemarch" than Mount Olympus. The uncorseted body of the twentieth century freed designers to drape and fold, from the pleated silk of Fortuny to the fluid chiffon of Tom Ford for Gucci (the show's sponsor, along with Condé Nast). As for goddesses, the one-shouldered sea-green dress that Mrs. Kennedy wore on a state visit to Cambodia would have looked just fine on Aphrodite as she emerged from the foam. Through Aug. 3. ♦ Museumgoers still searching for the perfect

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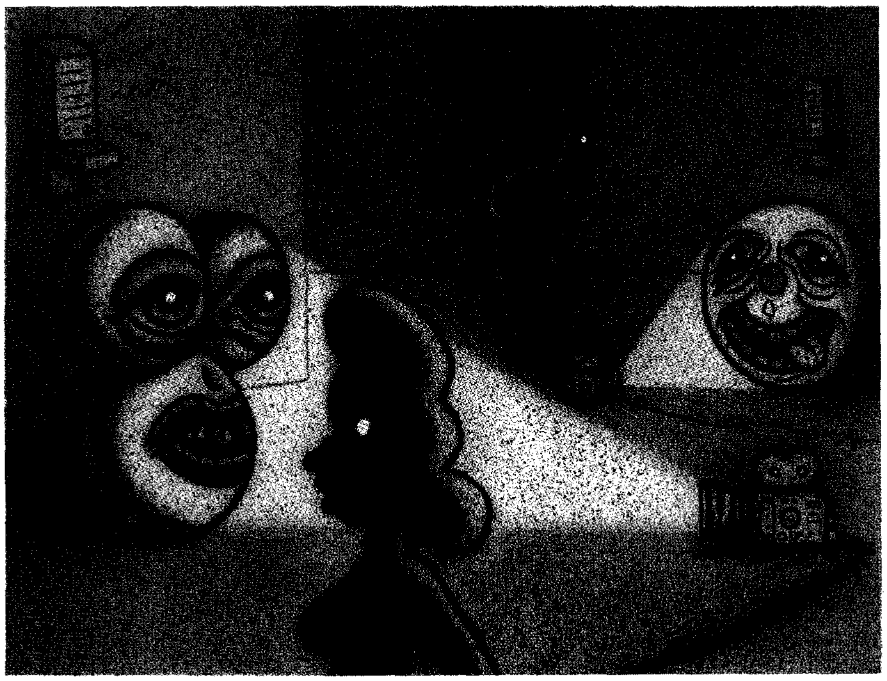
summer house should visit the playful roof-garden sculpture by Roy Lichtenstein, the late Pop artist who gave comic books cachet. The painted aluminum cottage has a red roof, white and yellow walls, and a blue chimney. Curtains resembling the artist's signature brushstrokes frame the windows. From the front, the structure appears nearly flat, like a 2-D illustration on vacation in physical space, and it plays a neat trick in inverted perspective: one corner that seems to advance toward the museum in fact recedes toward the park. The house sits on its own little lawn with a sign warning viewers to keep off the grass. Through Nov. 2. ♦ **"Manet/Velázquez: The French Taste for Spanish Painting,"** a ravishing and keenly illuminating show, marshalls great paintings to demonstrate a miracle in art history: the rebirth of Spanish Baroque painting in nineteenth-century Paris, brought about by Édouard Manet. At one end of its two-century leap, the show is augmented with works by Zurbarán, Murillo, and other Spaniards, and, at the other, by relevant figures from Delacroix to Sargent. But the summit meeting of Velázquez and Manet dominates. Through June 29. ♦ **"Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus."** Through Aug. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)



An installation by Tony Oursler, featuring talking heads of a sort, at Metro Pictures.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—**"Andy Warhol: Screen Tests,"** twenty-eight selections from the artist's series of portraits on film—lingering 16-mm. shots of various subjects. Through Sept. 1. (Open Thursdays, Sundays, and Mondays, 10 to 5, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—**"Matthew Barney: The Cremaster Cycle."** Through June 11. ♦ **"Kazimir Malevich: Suprematism."** Through Sept. 7. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)—In this retrospective devoted to the works of Elie Nadelman, more than two hundred sculptures, arranged chronologically, trace the evolution of Nadelman's concerns: from his early busts, which speak to ancient ideals of beauty, to his jazz-era middle works, folksy wooden genre figures of dancers and circus performers with sinuous bodies and gessoed features, to his final postwar efforts, rows of plaster figurines that look like toy-size gods and monsters. Through July 20. ♦ **"Paul Sietsema: Empire"** presents the chef d'œuvre of an experimental filmmaker: a ragged twenty-four-minute silent 16-mm. film that bristles with pans, fades, jump cuts, and so on of static objects in negative black and white or red and white. The main subjects are beautifully made models of an eighteenth-century French rococo interior and of Clement Greenberg's art-filled living room in 1964—shrines of extreme taste, which Sietsema's camera explores like a tongue probing broken teeth. The film's hermetic fervor becomes as disquieting as urgent warnings in a language that you don't quite understand. Sequences of dizzying geometric animation and ominous closeups of a grasshopper vary the spell. Through June 8. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—Robert Lesser, whose collection of toy robots wintered at the museum a couple of years ago, has loaned another pop trove: more than a hundred paintings for the covers of pulp magazines, primarily from the thirties and forties. The artists were academically trained illustrators like J. Allen St. John, Rafael De Soto, and Walter Baumhofer, and they worked in a fiercely competitive environment that nourished pictorial testosterone. If you're curious to see the unreconstructed masculine id in action or haven't sublimated a thirst for bound blondes or spurting pistols under titles like "The Grove of Doom," this exhibit is a kitsch cornucopia. Through Aug. 31. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MUSEO DEL BARRIO
Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-831-7272)—Rafael Tufiño paints Puerto Rico in idyllic and phantasmagorical color—a café wall is an electric shade of wisteria; cobblestones come in creamy pistachio; entire rooms are washed in dark-rum-and-coconut-colored light. Tufiño's early linoleum cuts, largely made up of black lines as fine as fingerprints, are equally impressive. One seven-piece portfolio tracing the story of the coffee harvest in Vegas Arriba, Adjuntas, shows how even the backbreaking parts of island life can end in celebration. Through Aug. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (212-534-1672)—Twenty-two photographs by Jessica Chornesky present female New Yorkers beyond the age of seventy who are anything but grandmotherly, and she supports her images with interview excerpts. Next to a monastic-looking print of the painter Agnes Martin hangs one of Rose Edwards, a septuagenarian who found her true calling in life at the age of sixty-nine. Edwards, now a stripper, poses in a red lacy bra, a black mini, fishnets, and three-inch heels. "This isn't novelty," she says. "This is sex with seven decades of power behind it. On a recent night, I danced so exuberantly I lost my bikini top, but I also lost my hearing aid." Through Sept. 1. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-369-4880)—The Academy's annual exhibitions currently alternate between invitational shows (last year's was a triumph) and members' shows like the present one, which offers a comical snapshot of the Academy's wildly uneven ranks. If you have an eye for mildly traditional or Photo-Realist painting, there are plenty of strong pictures by academicians like Yvonne Jacquette, Lois Dodd, and Richard Estes. There are equally fine things by less well known conservatives, among them Jerome Witkin, Susan Shatter, and Mary Beth McKenzie. But the deadwood, including a handful of ill-advised September 11th tributes, predominates. Through June 15. (Open Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 5, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

THOMAS SCHÜTTE
The German artist channels everyone from Maillot to Matisse to Miss November in three epic bronze sculptures reclining on oxidized-steel tables. All are female nudes with muscular thighs and an erotic inflection, but the similarities end there. The most enigmatic (that is, least figurative) lies prostrate as if in worship or submission, bumps extruding along the spine—it could be the she-creature from "Aliens" as rendered by Brancusi. Through June 28. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 212-977-7160.)

JEANNE SILVERTHORNE
The show opens with a pair of tiny rubber portraits of her mother, comic replays of Rodin's worried thinker. The duo eases viewers into Silverthorne's ambitious intention: to render emotion into form. A group of wall pieces depict magnified images of emotional states, including the squirmy protein activated by tears (it looks like rigatoni) or the writhing globule of "Dry Mouth." "Uvula and Tongue with 'The Scream,'" a more complex, installation-based work, is the most hauntingly satisfying, with its network of black rubber conduit spewing a succession of empty speech bubbles. Through June 20. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-688-5951.)

Short List

JOHN DUBROW
Salander O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 212-879-6606. Through May 31.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

TONY OURSLER
Oursler, who made his name projecting video faces onto the heads of mannequins, then moved on to puppets and eggs on sticks, here plays up the toylike quality of his work with Disneyesque fibreglass heads, on which he reduces faces to a feature or two. One round blob is the screen for a talkative, lipstick-smeared mouth, the two bobble ears above it for buggy, asynchronously blinking eyes. Oursler stars as an unhappy-in-love cyclops in purple eyeshadow and the too-knowledgeable "Perp," who advises parents to "follow their instincts" on "common sense safety" for kids. Children seem to love the work. Through June 21. (Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 212-206-7100.)

FRANK STELLA
After the gonzo brutalism of his last works, often dubbed the "Ugly Series," these new aluminum sculptures look almost deliriously pretty. With the

PATRICK DORIAN

works now free of painterly decoration, Stella's exclamatory energy soars in spiralling 3-D scribbles, composed of slender tubing and long tapering trusses. Occasionally, there's a color accent—a glossy black carbon form in "Pendanda" or a red enamel fitting in "Dalang." But the over-all look is pure silvery high-speed airiness, a kind of space-age Ab Ex rococo. Decades of relentless productivity may have taxed our gratitude, but, really, who's better than this? Through June 28. (Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 212-563-4474.)

BILLY SULLIVAN
Since the seventies Sullivan has captured the art-world demimonde in breezy paintings that are the visual equivalent of ice cubes tinkling in a glass. This show emphasizes still-life, heavy on the Matisse, an influence Sullivan happily wears on his sleeve. (Check out the catalogue flanked by a television remote and a vase of flowers in the painting titled "Matisse Still Life.") "Red Studio"-style red crops up everywhere, from the floor of a shower stall (a questionable choice) to a hotel room in Tulum. Through June 7. (Klagsbrun, 526 W. 26th St. 212-243-3335.)

FRED TOMASELLI
Tomaselli elevates tricks and devices from the sixteenth and twentieth centuries (the composite portraits of Arcimboldo, Surrealist collage) to hallucinatory heights. Figures made of cutout images—flowers, butterflies, body parts—are suspended in resin as they journey from cradle (the gargantuan toddler in "Toytopia") to a rave (hands raised as if from a mosh pit in "Expecting to Fly"). The strongest works are structured concentrically and, like mandalas, don't distinguish between the ornamental and the transcendental. Through June 21. (James Cohan, 533 W. 26th St. 212-741-9500.)

LISA YUSKAVAGE
The women in Yuskavage's paintings—no longer the erogenous mannequins that irked audiences in the early nineties, but not quite real people either—prowl and preen in a voluptuous, anticipatory haze. Sometime soon, phones or doorbells will ring. In the meantime, these plump, snub-nosed creatures work themselves over in front of the mirror, assessing outfits, bracelets, perfumes, postures. Yuskavage's world suggests a boudoir version of "Waiting for Godot," a place where sex is always feared, desired, imminent, and remote. In an art world that's full of borrowings from literal, in-your-face porn, Yuskavage's soft-core sublime sets her apart. Through June 27. (Boesky, 535 W. 22nd St. 212-680-9889.)

Short List

LIZ LARNER
303 Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 212-255-1121.
Through June 14.

JOEL SHAPIRO
Pace Wildenstein, 534 W. 25th St.
212-929-7000. Through July 31.

GALLERIES–SOHO

AIDAS BAREIKIS
The Lithuanian-born sculptor's third show is a sort of goth parade float, composed of shredded Halloween accessories and dime-store kitsch. Manned by leering marionettes whose bodies spurt foam insulation at every seam or orifice, the assemblage has a kind of glittering exuberance. The only wrong note is the Watteau-inspired title, "Le Charme de la Vie," which gives the piece a highbrow pedigree and a sarcastic tenor that don't suit its campy cheer. Through June 6. (Koenig, 249 Centre St. 212-334-9255.)

Short List

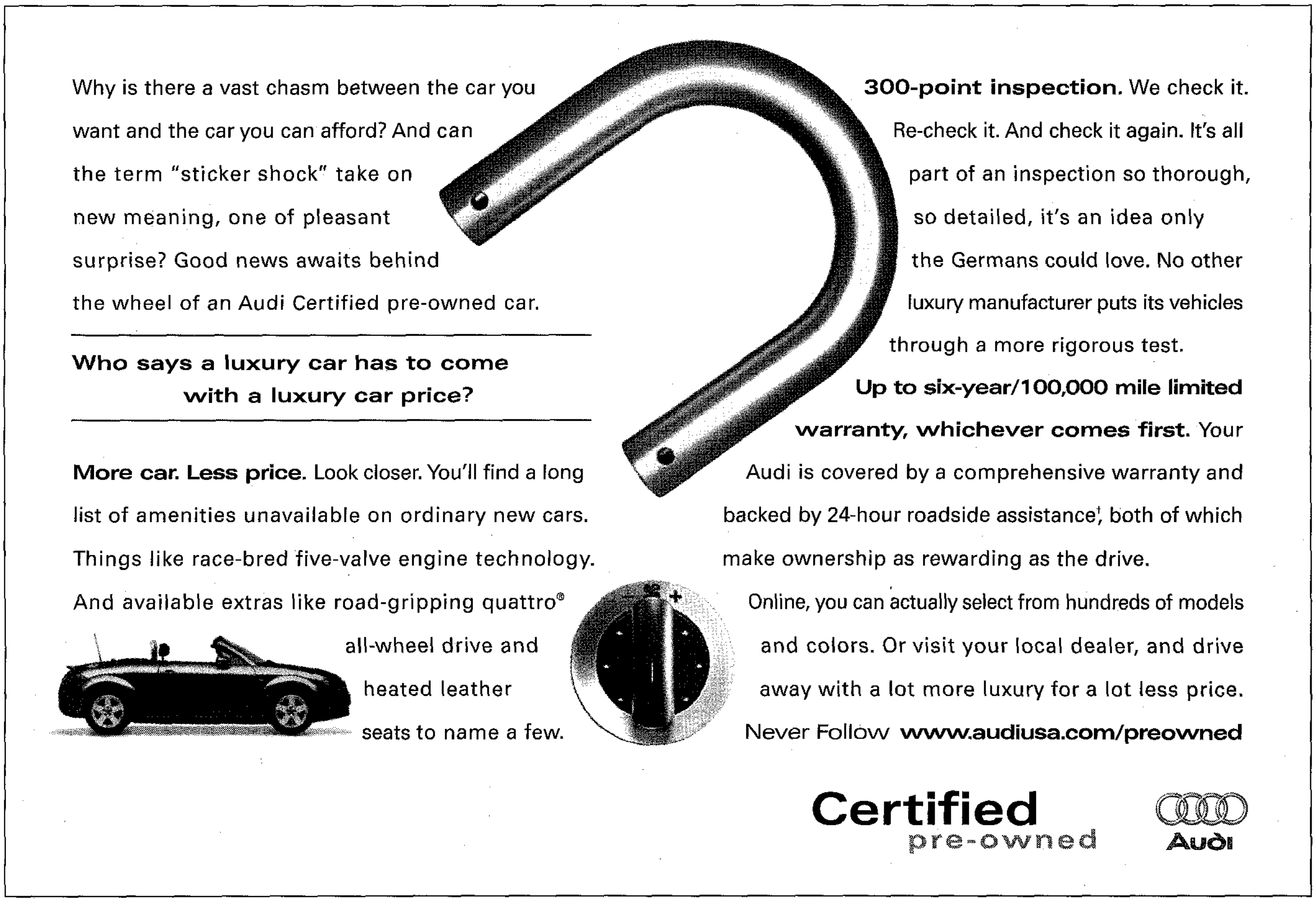
HELMUT FEDERLE
Peter Blum, 99 Wooster St. 212-343-0441.
Through July 12.

PHOTOGRAPHY

ROBERT ADAMS
"The New West," Adams's 1974 book about the battle between nature and sprawl in Colorado, let the world know that the photographer found the grandiose landscapes of Carleton Watkins, Edward Weston, and Ansel Adams (no relation) anachronistic. The photographs on view—images of cracked parking lots, half-built housing developments, yards juxtaposing wagon wheels with muscle cars, and electrical wires strung against mountain backdrops—were not included in that seminal work. Through June 14. (Roth Horowitz, 160A E. 70th St. 212-717-9067.)

ARNOLD ODERMATT
Part of the playfulness of Odermatt's photos of car crashes is attributable to the cars themselves, blocky, snub-nosed Volkswagens from the late nineteen-fifties; crumpled fenders and smashed tail-lights aside, they appear more like shiny, slow-moving beetles than like mauled lumps of machinery. Odermatt, a Swiss police photographer, first took official accident-scene pictures and later struck out on his own. Without the contextualizing visuals of a crash—blood, fatalities, collateral damage—the cars assume an inert coolness. Also on view are Odermatt's sly staged images of the police force. In his carefully composed tableaux (taken between 1963 and 1981), the officers direct traffic, frisk a suspect in the woods, and tear about on motorcycles, grinning heartily all the while. Through June 7. (Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. 212-727-2752.)

MARIANA YAMPOLSKY
The Mexican photographer, who died last year, fled Europe as a child and studied at the University of Chicago before finding her muse in Mexico City. She first went there in 1944 to work with the former Bauhaus director Hannes Meyer but soon turned to photography and studied with Lola Alvarez Bravo. The sampling of her work on view here serves as a fitting testimony to her love of the people and forms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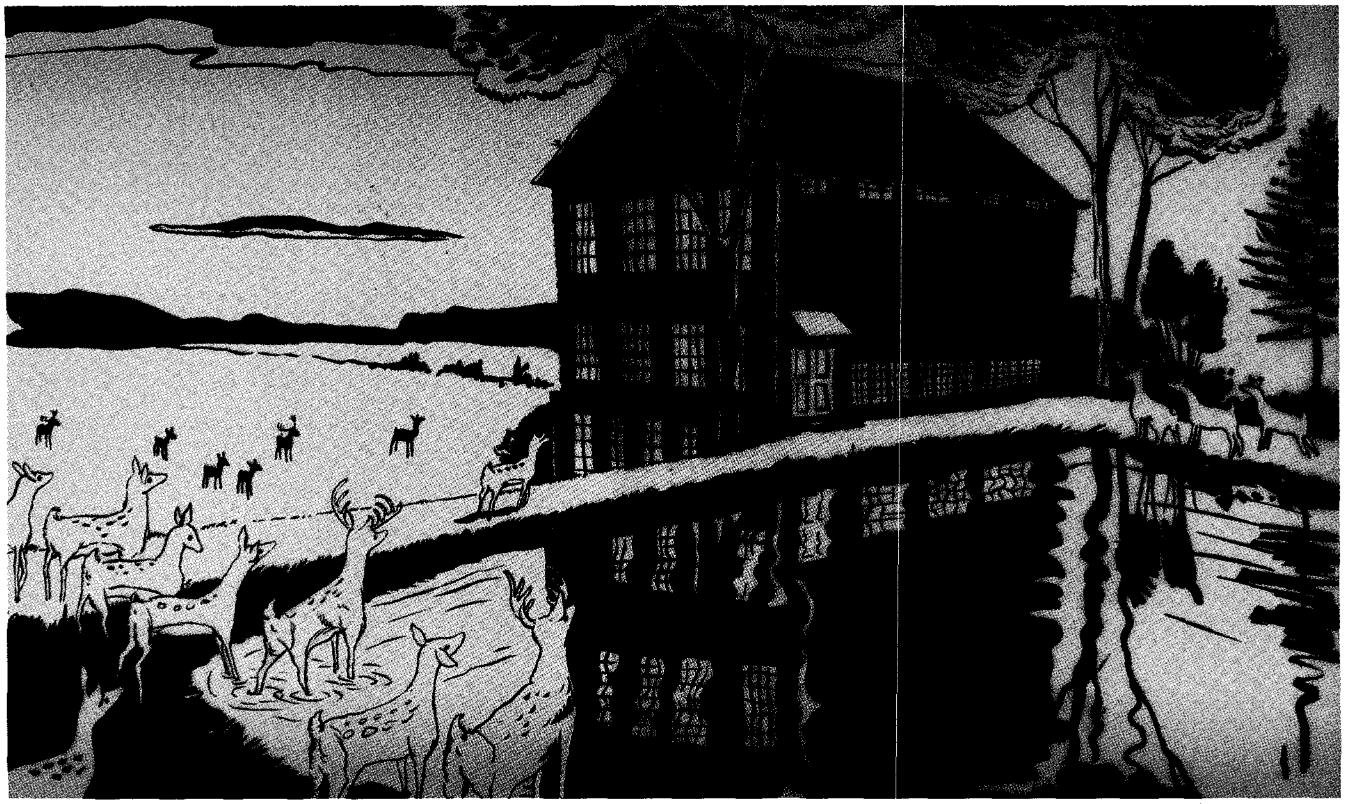

SHAKER HEIGHTS *The Shakers couldn't have thought much about the acoustics in the tannery they built in 1838 in Mount Lebanon, New York. But the building, the setting for the Tannery Pond series of chamber recitals, has turned out to be such a superb venue that Susan Graham, who is more often heard at the Met, recently called it the "best place to sing" after London's revered Wigmore Hall.*

ZOHAR LAZAR

found in Mexican life. Like Edward Weston, Yampolsky was fascinated by the dangerous flesh of maguey cacti, but her gift was to render with her lens the nobility and diversity of the country's indigenous groups. Through June 28. (Throckmorton, 145 E. 57th St. 212-223-1059.)

"THE PAINTED PHOTOGRAPH"
With the advent of photography, Indian artists working in the tradition of painted miniatures began to add pigment to the images of noblemen and religious scenes, and the results vary from the sublime to the surreal. Not afraid to add enormous jewels or bright turbans to the sitters' ensembles, the artists sometimes left the face untouched but would more often cover everything with a heavy layer of paint. Maharajas gave way to well-to-do businessmen and professors as the practice endured into the twentieth century, and there are a number of women holding babies and purses or striking aggressively modern poses. One image of a young prince of the Nawanagar House is a particularly subtle example of the technique and a small lantern slide, "The Rulers of India," makes the "Sgt. Pepper's" album cover look like a Puritan class photo. Through July 12. (Sepia, 148 W. 24th St. 212-645-9444.)

Short List

RUDY BURCKHARDT
De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave. 212-262-5050.
Through June 6.

CARLO MOLLINO
Salon 94, 12 E. 94th St. 646-672-9212.
Through June 25.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
May 28 at 10:15 A.M.: The final session of a two-part sale of Latin-American paintings and sculptures includes works by such artists as Matta, Bravo, Zúñiga ("Amantes," a sculpture in Mexican black marble), Siqueiros, and Carrington, along with several religious paintings from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries and a selection of landscapes. ♦ May 29 at 10:15 A.M.: A painting from 1468 of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child in a garden by the Master of the Tiburtine Sibyl (expected to bring up to three hundred thousand dollars) is the highlight of a sale of Old Master paintings that features works from the French, Dutch, and Italian schools. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 212-606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
May 28 at 7 and May 29 at 10 A.M.: The midtown house offers its own two-part auction of Latin-American art. Matta's "Endless Nudes" (1941-42), the property of the Seagram collection and expected to bring over a million dollars, is the highlight of the sale, which also includes works by Botero, Bravo, Carrington, and Torres-Garcia, among others. ♦ May 30 at 10 A.M.: A selection of Old Master paintings, including still-lifes, genre scenes, landscapes, portraits, and religious works by such artists as Barlow, Caron, and Greuze. ♦ June 3 at 10 A.M. and 2: Jewelry, including a diamond "ice cube" wristwatch of some sixty-six carats by Chopard (expected to bring up to a hundred and fifty thousand dollars) and an invisibly set boule-sapphire ring by Van Cleef & Arpels. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

KESTENBAUM AND COMPANY
June 2 at 5: Hebrew printed books from the collection of the German-Israeli publisher Salman Schocken (1877-1959). A copy of Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, printed in Constantinople in 1509 (estimated to sell for approximately fifty thousand dollars), is a highlight of the sale. (Doral Park Hotel, Park Ave. at 38th St. 212-366-1197.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

AMATO OPERA: "ANDREA CHÉNIER"
The Lower East Side's feisty chamber-opera group, in its last production of the season, squeezes Giordano's verismo spectacle of the French Revolution into its pint-size theatre. Anthony Amato directs and conducts. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 212-228-8200. May 31 at 7:30 and June 1 at 2:30.)

MIDAMERICA PRODUCTIONS: ROSSINI'S "ERMIONE"
Peter Tiboris's organization, best known for bringing a year-round caravan of young American choruses through Carnegie Hall, presents the first-ever New York performance of Rossini's forgotten "tragic action" based on Racine's "Andromache." Despite a strong cast at its 1819 première, the piece, one of the best of his serious operas, disappeared until a European revival in 1987. But Rossini, who carefully preserved the manuscript score, knew that its day would come: the title role, that of a ferocious Spartan princess trying to hang on to her man in the aftermath of the Trojan War, is full of opportunities for Irini Tsirakidis, a commanding Greek soprano, to prove her worth. The bel-canto tenor Bruce Ford (her colleague in the Dallas Opera's recent production of the piece), the tenor Barry Banks, and the mezzo-soprano Victoria Livengood are also featured in the cast; Tiboris conducts a concert performance, featuring the Manhattan Philharmonic and a coalition of local choruses. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. June 3 at 7:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
In his Symphony No. 4 ("Adagio"), Krzysztof Penderecki would seem to have come full circle, using its theme (a commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution) to merge the Brucknerian grandeur of his neo-Romantic style with some of the modernist pyrotechnics of his early, avant-garde days. Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream" Overture and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 complete the program; Lorin Maazel conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. May 29 and June 3 at 7:30, May 30 at 11 A.M., and May 31 at 8.)

RUSSIAN CHAMBER CHORUS OF NEW YORK
Since Russian choirs tend to hew closely to their deeply rooted traditions, the chamber chorus's new-

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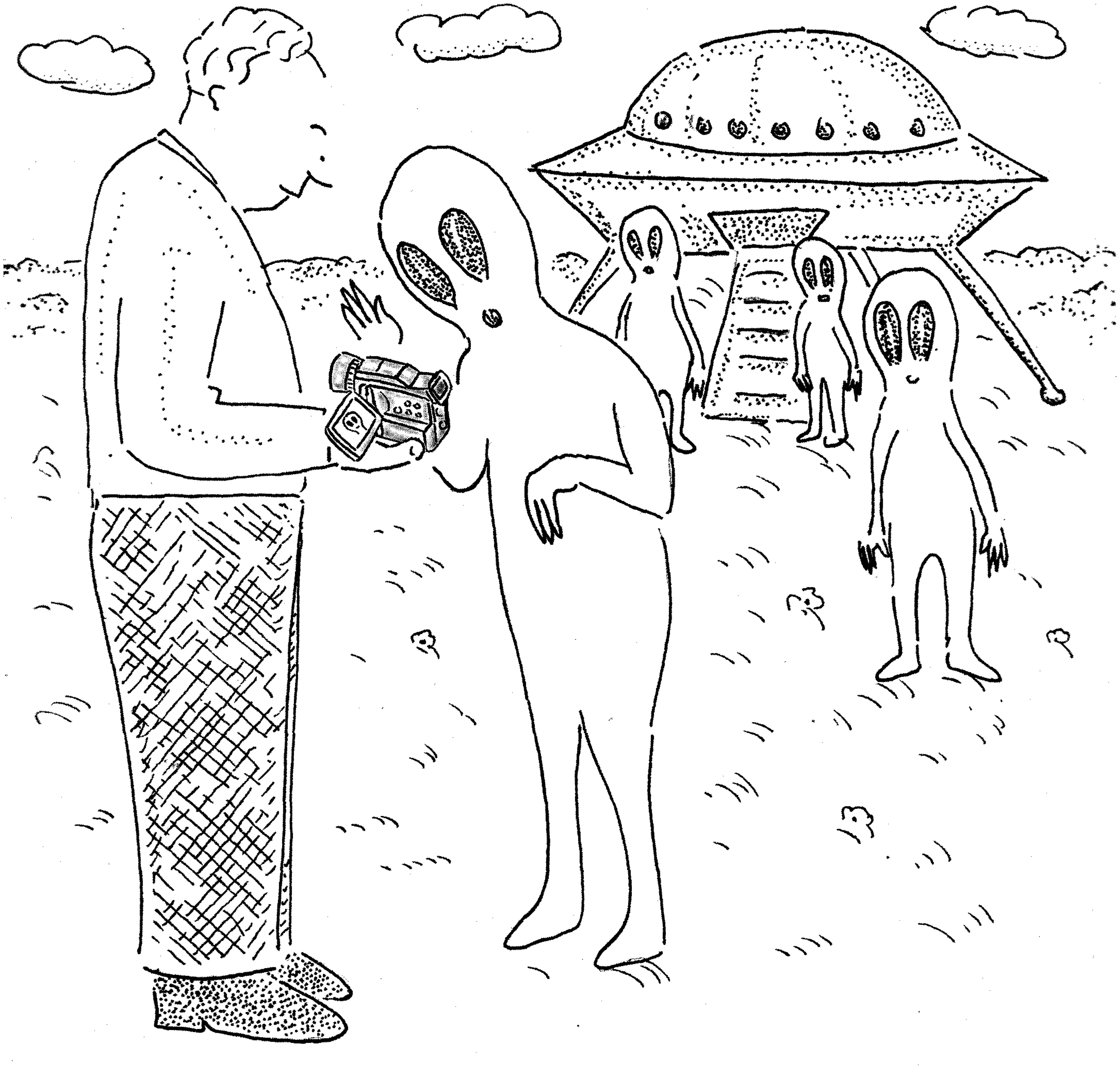

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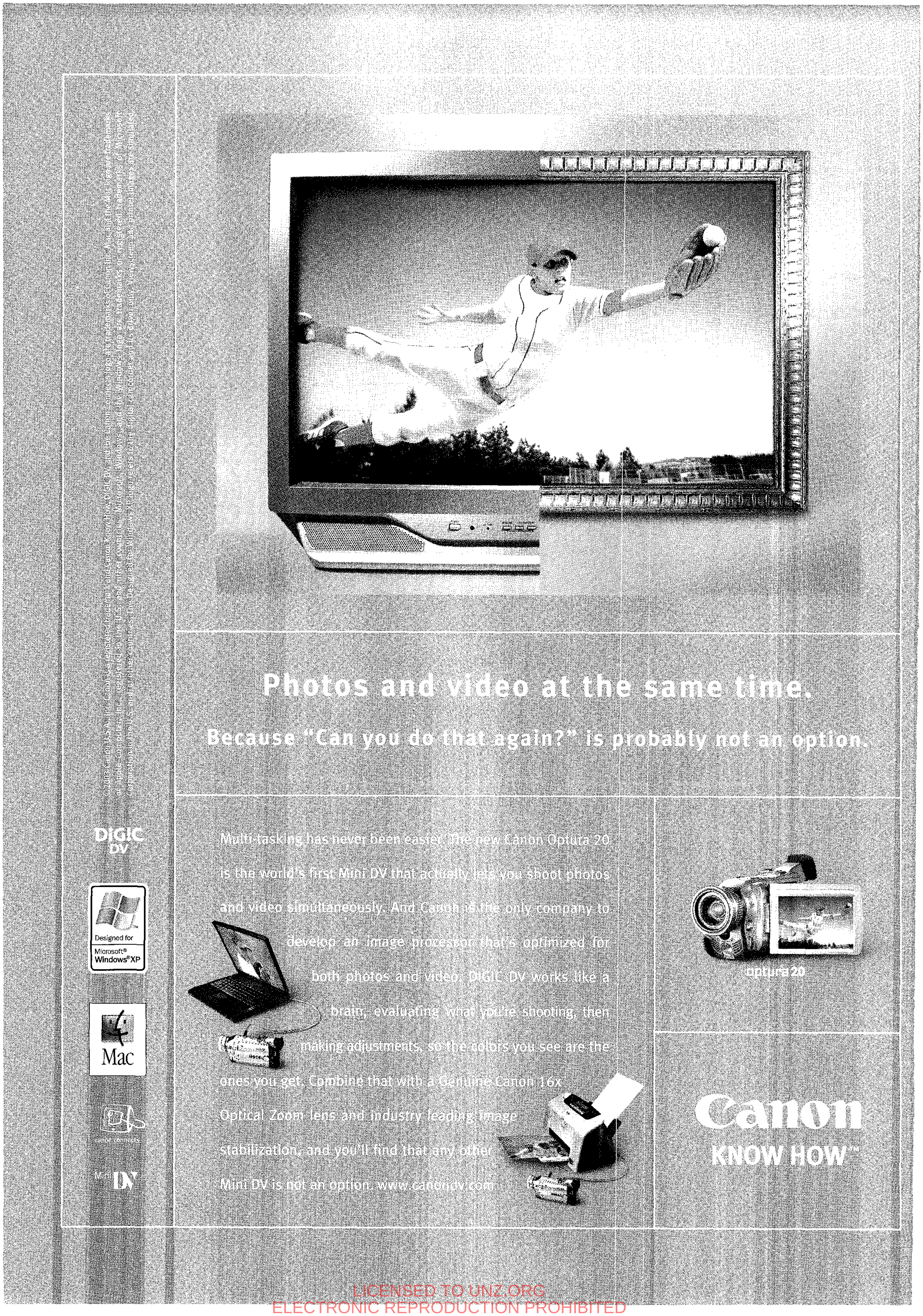

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est program is a genuine surprise. It juxtaposes early Slavonic chant with Gregorian monody, pairs little-known Russian polyphonic works with motets by Lassus and Palestrina, and balances out Bortynansky's grand Baroque-style Choral Concerto No. 4 with two new works (including a setting of a Blavatsky text scored for voices, piano, and synthesizers) by Nikolai Kachanov, the group's director. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 212-662-2133. May 31 at 8. ♦ Church of the Good Shepherd, 240 E. 31st St. June 1 at 4. Tickets at the door.)

NEW YORK VIRTUOSO SINGERS
In the second of two concerts given to celebrate the seventy-fifth birthday of the Scottish-American composer Thea Musgrave, Harold Rosenbaum conducts his ensemble in a selection of works (including the American première of her setting of Auden's Christmas oratorio "For the Time Being"). (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 212-279-4200. May 31 at 8.)

NEW YORK YOUTH SYMPHONY
At first glance, the orchestra's final program of the season seems rather conventional: "If I Forget Thee," a première by the young composer Brian P. Herrington, along with standard works by Wagner, Gershwin ("Rhapsody in Blue," with a star turn by the pianist Misha Dichter), and Bartók (the Concerto for Orchestra). But Herrington, a Southerner who studies at the Royal Academy of Music, writes music that melds the influences of British modernism (he's a big Birtwistle fan) with the bluegrass "mountain music" of his heritage—which should make the strong folk-music influences in the Gershwin and the Bartók all the more apparent. Paul Haas conducts. (Carnegie Hall. 212-581-5933. June 1 at 2.)

CANTORI NEW YORK
Mark Shapiro conducts an eclectic concert of twentieth-century music, mostly choral, by Erkki-Sven Tüür (the American première of the Requiem, influenced by Zappa as much as by Pärt), Andrew Imbrie, Chris DeBlasio (the lushly neo-Romantic "The Best Beloved"), and Keith Jarrett (the Elegy for Violin and String Orchestra, with Curtis Macomber). (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. June 1 at 7:30.)

RECITALS

PHIL KLINE'S "ZIPPO SONGS"
A self-styled "songspiel," Kline's latest work is a staged song cycle performed by the avant-cabaret vocalist Theo Bleckmann that incorporates speeches by Donald Rumsfeld, poetry by David Shapiro, and impromptu verses scrawled on Zippo lighters by American soldiers in Vietnam. The violinist Todd Reynolds and the drummer Dave Cossin, two stars of the fringe scene, help him out; Emma Griffin directs. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 212-647-0202. May 28-31 at 7:30.)

THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER BAND
Baroque and contemporary lie side by side in the group's annual "Bach Juxtaposed" concert, which combines selections from the Master's "Art of Fugue" with commissioned works by José Luis Greco, Joseph Fennimore, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. May 28 at 8.)

GRANT JOHANNESEN
The Performing Arts division of the New York Public Library has devoted a three-concert series to the music of Carlos Chávez, whose manuscripts are stored there. Johannesen, one of America's great veterans of the keyboard and a colleague of the Mexican composer, wraps up the series with a selection of his songs (with the soprano Lindsay Killian), on a program that also includes music by Strauss, Diamond, Beethoven, and Fauré and selections from Brahms's Études, another manuscript in the library's collection (which, like the Chávez, will be on display for public viewing). (Bruno Walter Auditorium, Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Ave. May 29 at 6:30. No tickets required.)

BARGEMUSIC
The floating chamber-music series presents three centennial programs in homage to Gregor Piatigorsky, performed by three of his students: the cellist Nathaniel Rosen, the violinist Paul Rosenthal, and the pianist Doris Stevenson. May 29 at 7:30: Rosen plays Bach's Suites Nos. 1, 3, and 5 for Solo Cello. ♦ May 30 at 7:30: Rosen returns to perform Suites Nos. 2, 4, and 6. ♦ May 31 at 7:30 and June 1 at 4: The three musicians combine for a program of Schubert, Paganini, Smetana (the Trio in G Minor, Op. 15), and others. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

COMPOSERS CONCORDANCE
The new-music collective offers its final concert of the season, a menu of works by George Walker, Joseph Pherson ("Blacklight," a fantasy on a twenty-one-note "blackjack" scale, played by the cellist Dan Barrett), Gene Pritsker, and others. (Frederick Loewe Theatre, New York University, 35 W. 4th St. May 29 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

DMITRY RACHMANOV
An ambitious program of bravura piano works by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff (the "Corelli Variations"), and Prokofiev (the Sonata No. 7), offered by the Russian-born pianist. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. June 2 at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

TANNERY POND CONCERTS: BEN HEPPNER
Christian Steiner, a photographer who has shot portraits of many of the most illustrious classical performers, organized this series in 1993, accompanying Jessye Norman at the piano (he's an accomplished performer himself). Although his latest presentation features two good friends, the tenor Ben Heppner and the pianist Craig Rutenberg (in a program of songs by Schumann, Duparc, and Tosti), he always seeks new ones, and subsequent concerts will add outstanding younger artists to the mix. (Darrow School, Route 20, New Lebanon, N.Y. 888-820-1696. May 31 at 8. Through Oct. 11.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
May 28 at 7: The literary journal *Tin House* gathers the screenwriter Estep Nagy, the novelist Dale Peck, and the essayist Joshua Wolf Shenk for a reading of their work. (Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ June 2 at 7: Timothy Hutton, Nicole Burdette, and other actors celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the *Paris Review* with passages from the new anthology "The Paris Review Book of Heartbreak, Madness, Sex, Love, Betrayal, Outsiders, Intoxication, War, Whimsy, Horrors, God, Death, Dinner, Baseball, Travels, the Art of Writing and Everything Else in the World Since 1953." (Culture Project, 45 Bleecker St. For more information, call 212-879-1375.) ♦ June 2 at 7: Michael Hainey, Junno Lee, and others read from their poetry. (Junno's, 64 Downing St. No tickets necessary.)

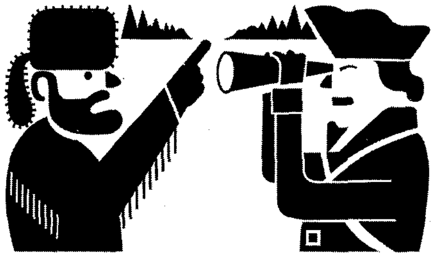
TALKS
May 28 at 6:30: The Explorers Club presents Mabel H. Cabot, who will talk about the adventures of her mother, Janet Elliot Wulsin, in western China, northwestern Tibet, and Inner Mongolia during the nineteen-twenties. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. For more information, call 212-517-2742.) ♦ May 28 at 6:30: Erica Jong, whose latest novel is "Sappho's Leap," talks about the Greek poet. (Celeste Bartos Forum, New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For more information, call 212-930-0571.) ♦ May 31 at 1:30: In a bicentennial celebration of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Barbara Salowey and other scholars explore his life and work. (School of Practical Philosophy, 12 E. 79th St. For more information, call 212-744-0764.)

WALK
June 1 at 2: William Kornblum, a sociology professor and the author of "At Sea in the City," an account of sailing around New York Harbor in a 1910 catboat, leads a tour of Battery Park City's waterfront. For more information, call 212-267-9700.

BOOK CURRENTS

The Lore of Explorers

"The looming mist, the shout in his breast, the wordless awe. But that is just it: wordless. A crash of white filling his ears and I! I! I! as he flew down the cliff." The grandeur of the Great Falls of the Missouri overwhelms Meriwether Lewis in Brian Hall's novel **I SHOULD BE EXTREMELY HAPPY IN YOUR COMPANY** (Viking), which deftly re-creates Lewis's journey with his partner, William Clark, across the new Western territory. Lewis is sensitive and insecure, suffering from self-recrimination as he tries, and fails, to meet President Jefferson's eccentric demands—to find a mammoth, Welsh Indians, and, of course, the Northwest Passage.



RICHARD MCGUIRE

More insidious motives emerge in **SEDUCED BY THE WEST** (Ivan R. Dee), Laurie Winn Carlson's examination of the political plotting that surrounded the expedition. Carlson speculates that Thomas Jefferson may have intended to provoke war with Spain or establish a separate, Republican nation in the West. Jefferson, perhaps unknowingly, colluded with spies and traitors, and he may have coldly planned to sacrifice his former secretary: "Perhaps Jefferson did not even *want* Lewis to arrive on the Pacific coast. What he may have wanted . . . was a martyr."

Whether Lewis and Clark ever arrived didn't really matter, argues Thomas P. Slaughter in **EXPLORING LEWIS AND CLARK: REFLECTIONS ON MEN AND WILDERNESS** (Knopf), noting that the Scottish explorer Alexander Mackenzie had made the overland journey ten years earlier and that traders had already begun to penetrate the territory. Slaughter writes, "It is really quite marvelous that Lewis and Clark were able to sustain the fantasy of controlled, objective 'discovery' so long and in the face of so much evidence to the contrary."

—*Andrea Thompson*

MOVIES OPENING

CAPTURING THE FRIEDMANS
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening May 30. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.)

FINDING NEMO
A Pixar animated film about two fish, a father and son, who become separated on the Great Barrier Reef. Andrew Stanton ("A Bug's Life") wrote and directed. The voice cast includes Albert Brooks, Ellen DeGeneres, and Willem Dafoe. Opening May 30.

THE ITALIAN JOB
F. Gary Gray directed this remake of the 1969 heist film, with Mark Wahlberg as the gang leader Charlie Croker. Also with Charlize Theron, Mos Def, Edward Norton, Jason Statham, and Donald Sutherland. Opening May 30.

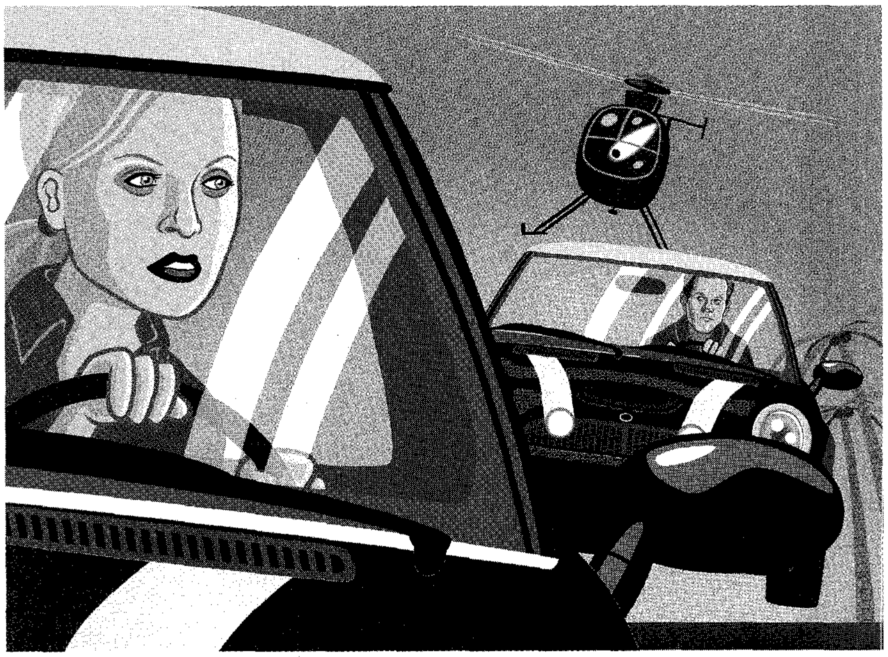
REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS TO COME
A cinematic essay about the Surrealist photographer Denise Bellon, co-directed by Chris Marker and Bellon's daughter Yannick. Paired with two shorts: a documentary on Colette by Yannick Bellon and an homage to the French Riviera by Agnès Varda. In French. Opening May 28. (Film Forum.)

TOGETHER
Chen Kaige ("Farewell My Concubine") directed this drama about a precocious young violinist from rural China who moves to Beijing to pursue his studies. In Mandarin. Opening May 30. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

FILM NOTES

ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS
A trashy love story about the attraction between a natural man (Rock Hudson, as a New England tree surgeon) and a frustrated-by-respectability rich widow (Jane Wyman) who is some fifteen years older than he and has two grown children. Hudson and Wyman are hardly an electric combination, but this 1955 production is made with so much symbolism that some people actually see it as allegorical. Its reputation derives from the slurpy, peculiarly glossy intensity of Douglas Sirk's direction, the same sort of pop spirituality that he had brought to Ross Hunter's "Magnificent Obsession," with the same two stars, the year before. Sirk's blend of Germanic kitsch and Hollywood kitsch was a major influence on Fassbinder, whose work is a further formalization of Sirk's schematic sentimentality.—*Pauline Kael* (BAM Rose Cinemas; June 3.)

L'AUBERGE ESPAGNOLE
The title of Cédric Klapisch's film means, in French slang, a free-for-all. This charming, utterly undramatic sketchbook movie is about a twenty-five-year-old Parisian graduate student, Xavier (Romain Duris), who goes to Spain as part of a European exchange program and lives with a polyglot mix of students in a cramped walkup apartment. The hero is instructed in lovemaking techniques by a lesbian roommate; he then has an affair with a luscious but vacuous married woman (Judith Godrèche). Not much happens, but the characters, searching for romance and good times, wander through Barcelona's handsome ochre streets, across the Gaudi pavilions and the sun-drenched piazzas; the movie is as much a love letter to the slowed-down erotic pleasures of the city as the New Wave films were to the endless social and intellectual enchantments of Paris. Shot with a lightweight digital camera, the movie, unimportant in itself, opens up possibilities for new, casual styles of filmmaking.—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 5/19/03.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, New York Twin, and Union Square.)



Charlize Theron and Mark Wahlberg in "The Italian Job," opening May 30.

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM
A crowd-pleasing British movie devoted to the radical idea that girls can play soccer and sprain their ankles. Jess (Parminder Nagra) is a Sikh who hides her love of the game from her conservative parents, while Jules (Keira Knightley) is a tomboy who defies her English mother. Both have a thing for their Irish coach, Joe (Jonathan Rhys-Meyers)—he of the wounded knee and the watery eyes. The movie is a hodgepodge: nicely barbed scenes with Jess's family bump against weird practice montages that play like sports-bra ads. What it all adds up to is multicultural empowerment for the pre-teen shin-guard crowd.—*Michael Agger* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE BIG HEAT
Sidney Boehm's solid, hard-nosed script might have been made into a routine cops-and-robbers thriller, but the director, Fritz Lang, gave it a formalized style. This 1953 movie is all of a piece; it's designed in light and shadows, and its underworld atmosphere glistens with the possibilities of sadism—this is a definitive film noir, with a few stunningly choreographed scenes. Glenn Ford is Dave Bannion, a police lieutenant who ignores the orders of his superiors and investigates a big-time gangster (Alexander Scourby). A bomb is planted in Bannion's car, and his wife (Jocelyn Brando) is blown up. Full of hate, Bannion leaves the department to find revenge. When one of the gangster's henchmen (Lee Marvin) throws scalding coffee at his mistress, a high-living tough-girl lush (Gloria Grahame), and she wants vengeance, too, she joins up with Bannion. And the film accumulates corpses and arrests. With Carolyn Jones and Dan Seymour.—*P.K.* (Gramercy Theatre; June 1-2.)

BRUCE ALMIGHTY
Jim Carrey as an all-powerful being? Please, God, no. In this underwhelming comedic parable, Carrey is the titular Bruce, a "wacky" Buffalo newscaster who is granted dominion over his home town by God (Morgan Freeman in a white suit). Sketchy comic conceits can sometimes be saved by inspired performances, but no one besides Carrey seems to be having much fun, and he's relying on his goofy faces again. The movie's subtext refers to Carrey's own career: his character uses his powers to become an anchor and do "serious news," but then decides that making people laugh is just as worthy. Fair enough, but the laughs never arrive. With Jennifer Aniston, who looks frightened most of the time.—*M.A.* (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE DANCER UPSTAIRS
John Malkovich's premier effort as a movie director, an adaptation of Nicholas Shakespeare's 1995 novel about the hunt for a Shining Path terrorist in Peru, is at times rather vague. Malkovich rushes through some of his scenes, and his Spanish, French, and Argentinean actors fail to sound colloquial and relaxed in English. But the movie has a sinister atmosphere that begins to work on you. In the nameless capital city (i.e., Lima), cryptic, intimidating posters show up on the street and dead dogs with menacing signs around their necks are found hanging from lampposts. The revolutionaries are everywhere and nowhere, a murderously mischievous presence; they are like artists of revolution, staging their gruesome acts at their own convenience, and Malkovich doesn't prepare us for the horrors or underline them with ominous music. With Javier Bardem as the civilized policeman who pursues the terrorist for years and Laura Morante as a ballet teacher who may be involved in dangerous activities.—*D.D.* (5/5/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kew Gardens Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Sunshine Cinema.)

DOWN WITH LOVE
A lo-cal attempt at no-sex romantic comedy, a genre that was hardly substantial in the first place. Ewan McGregor plays Catcher Block, a writer for *Know* magazine in 1962. Renée Zellweger plays Barbara Novak, a mannequin lightly disguised as a best-selling author. The plot stitches them loosely together, as Catcher, the unreconstructed Lothario, tries to force Barbara, the scourge of soft hearts, to fall in love with him. It is hard to divine the purpose behind this pastiche: is the director, Peyton Reed, making sport of the innocent froth that passed for romance in a more innocent era, or is he aiming to revive it as a straight exercise in retro style? Can one simply drop an outdated genre into the laps of mod-

MICHAEL WELDON

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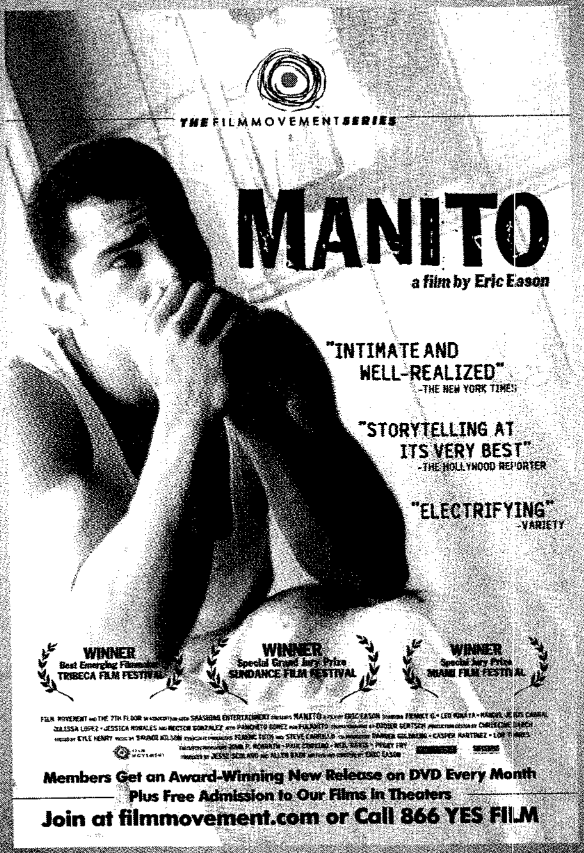

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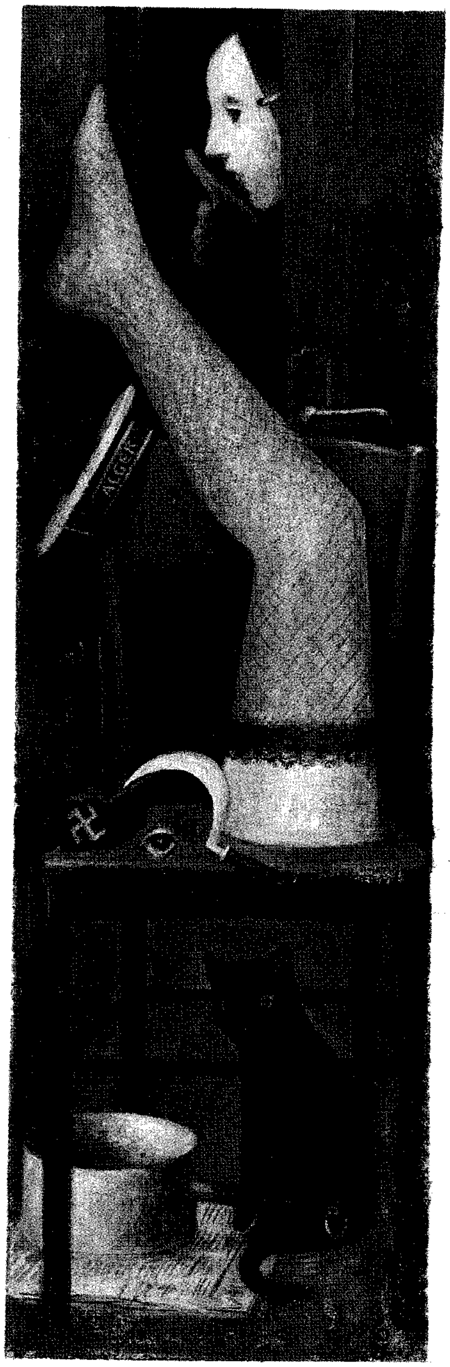
ern moviegoers and hope that it still works? The gags wander between the sweet and the unconsciously filthy, and the project's principal appeal will be to devotees of early-sixties hemlines. Indeed, given the blinding array of colors on show, the movie may be viewed most fruitfully under the influence of early-sixties pharmaceuticals. With David Hyde Pierce as Block's editor, who really *isn't* gay.—*Anthony Lane* (5/26/03) (Battery Park 16, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 62nd & Broadway, 34th Street Theatre, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY
It remains a deliriously over-scaled pursuit movie about three opportunistic treasure hunters in the sunburned Southwest—the Good (Clint Eastwood), the Bad (Lee Van Cleef), and the Ugly (Eli Wallach)—racing for buried rebel gold while the Civil War still rages. Yet the restoration of one more quarter-hour to the hundred-and-sixty-one-minute English-language version of Sergio Leone's 1966 spectacle allows viewers to appreciate even more the director's unique take on the Western. With the help of the composer Ennio Morricone and the cinematographer Tonino Delli Colli, he turns it into opera, imbuing shakedowns, shootouts, and everything in between with ineluctable rhythms, grand gestures that alternate with telling details, and resonating symbols derived from pulp fiction and pulp history. The additional scenes mostly flesh out the wartime texture, which adds an ironic underscore to the antiheroes' reduction of life to guns and money. If the limited, bullet-eyed expressions of Eastwood and Van Cleef keep this film from rising to the grand kitsch emotions of the director's "Once Upon a Time" epics, Wallach's hyperactive Mexican bandit (a vaudevillian extension of his character in John Sturges's critically underrated "The Magnificent Seven") transforms bouts of wheedling and revenge into black-comic arias.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; May 30-June 3.)

LILYA 4-EVER
Lilya (Oksana Akinshina) is a chirpy girl of sixteen, sunk in a stagnant backwater of what used to be the Soviet Union. She is, to all intents and purposes, orphaned when her witch of a mother abandons her to seek a life in America. Lilya starts with practically nothing and goes downhill from there, winding up selling her body to the vulpine patrons of a bar; what redeems the movie—what renders a squalid experience quite sacred in its intensity—is the vehemence with which the writer and director, Lukas Moodysson, asks whether his heroine has also sold her soul. The caustic portrait that he paints of his native Sweden, to which the deluded Lilya is transported in her quest for a future, has brought him both outrage and acclaim; what is beyond doubt is the brio of his storytelling and the branding of the girl's misfortune onto our hearts and nerves. With Artiom Bogucharski as the artless dodger who becomes her only friend. In German, Swedish, English, and Russian.—*A.L.* (4/21 & 28/03) (Cinema Village.)

MAN ON THE TRAIN
The French director Patrice Leconte, having flitted from one genre to the next with movies as different as "Ridicule" and "The Girl on the Bridge," has now settled on his most consoling subject: the comedy of good companionship. Johnny Hallyday (who was, in his time, France's answer to Elvis) plays Milan, a low-level hit man who arrives, at the bluish end of a day, in a small French town and accepts the offer of a room from Manesquier (Jean Rochefort), a retired schoolteacher. For an hour, not much happens, and we are granted the languorous—and, to many filmgoers, increasingly rare—pleasure of watching two people lock gently together. They even trade roles: Rochefort, the most playful melancholic in cinema, learns to fire a gun, while Hallyday takes up pipe and slippers. All of this is delectable: Leconte has a taste for minor, chewed-up lives, and you can't help sighing with regret as he gathers his wits and hurries the plot toward an unnecessary climax. In French.—*A.L.* (5/12/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Cinema 1, and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE MATRIX RELOADED
Neo (Keanu Reeves), the One, fights a courtyard of replicant Agent Smiths (Hugo Weaving), who are all in black suits and ties, in what is perhaps the wittiest digital spectacle yet, and there's a bumper-cars-on-the-freeway episode that outdoes all such previous scenes. But most of this sequel, written and directed by the brothers Larry and Andy Wachowski, is heavy-spirited and pompous, even faintly embarrassing. At Zion, the city deep within the earth where the free humans live (all the others, trapped in the simulated reality of "the Matrix," are controlled by machines), a boring multiethnic saturnalia goes on forever. The scenes of lovemaking between Reeves and Carrie-Anne Moss are pure dreamy kitsch (you can take your twelve-year-old); the various leaders stand around in robes and make speeches at each other in the mock-medieval gibberish that seems to have taken over mass culture ever since J. R. R. Tolkien unleashed it on the world. The movie has the portentous hollowness of so much bad sci-fi, in which the world is always about to end, but nothing else much matters, or makes any sense. The original, with its touch of the uncanny, has a special appeal for techno-geek teen-agers and perhaps for certain intellectuals who feel trapped in a corporate-controlled culture that they are powerless to fight. Instead, they turn themselves into hip theoreticians of simulated reality, an idea no more interesting than the gaga psychedelic fantasies of the sixties era. It's an unpleasant irony that the artistic value of "The Matrix" has been crushed by exactly the franchise-making mentality that admirers of the original hate the most.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, Battery Park 16, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)



At Film Forum, Chris Marker's "Remembrance of Things to Come."

GERARD DUBOIS

A MIGHTY WIND
The latest satirical documentary from the writer-director-actor Christopher Guest and his wonderful stock company. This one, set in the present day, is about a reunion of schlock commercial folksingers (of the Peter, Paul & Mary or Ian & Sylvia type) from the sixties, and though the movie is not as funny as "This Is Spinal Tap" or "Best in Show" it's brighter and more revivifying than anything else around these days. Guest's subjects, in all these films, are people from the drearier corners of show business who are so deep within whatever it is they do that they have lost all traces of self-consciousness. His films are, in the end, not so much mock documentaries as records of a deep-down dorkiness that becomes a form of blessedness. Guest is a realist who loves his subjects. With Eugene Levy, Catherine O'Hara, Michael McKean, Parker Posey, et al. Ed Begley, Jr., is particularly good as the Swedish-born public-television executive who drops Yiddish into every sentence in order to remain a success in New York.—*D.D.* (5/5/03) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kew Gardens Cinema, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 72nd Street East, and Village East Cinemas.)

RAISING VICTOR VARGAS
A lovely small-scale comedy about the commonplace mating rituals in a Dominican section of Manhattan. It's summer, and everyone is on the prowl, but the neighborhood is friendly and peaceful; chickens run through the alleys, and small gardens pop up here and there among the projects. The boys act cocky even when they're unsure of themselves, and the girls pretend they don't need boys. Nothing very important happens, but, moment by moment, the movie is alive with the play of gestures and glances, the faces of aggression and withdrawal. Victor Rasuk is well cast as the good-looking local Casanova, perhaps eighteen years old, and Judy Marte is the wary young beauty who gets him to change his style. The writer-director Peter Sollett stays close to the actors, all nonprofessionals, and they greet the camera with a modest but exploratory willingness.—*D.D.* (3/31/03) (Empire 25, Kew Gardens Cinema, Sunshine Cinema, and Sutton 1 and 2.)

THE RECKLESS MOMENT
A responsible mother (Joan Bennett), trying to be the man of the house while her husband is overseas, takes extreme measures to protect her daughter (Geraldine Brooks) from being connected to the accidental death of the girl's sleazy lover (Shepperd Strudwick). Max Ophuls (credited as Opuls), shooting on location in Los Angeles and in a quaint seaside town fifty miles away, fleshes out this unusual 1949 domestic film noir with a sort of heightened quotidian detail—as Ophuls's camera glides through the woman's house, you feel you know it better than you do your own. And James Mason is essential in the nonsensical role of a sensitive, caring blackmailer. He helps Ophuls spin the soap-opera elements of the story into wonderfully ironic romantic melodrama: a suburban fairy tale in which a dark knight helps the heroine slay her dragons, but one in which no one looks as if he or she will live happily ever after. Remade in 2001 as "The Deep End."—*M.S.* (Gramercy Theatre; May 31 and June 1.)

THE SHAPE OF THINGS
The latest Neil LaBute exercise in scorn and betrayal, in which people who don't belong together in the first place tear each other apart. These quarrels

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are supposed to reveal the drives and jealousies beneath the surface of companionship, but the LaBute movies (including "In the Company of Men" and "Your Friends & Neighbors") are redolent of the kind of self-important Off Broadway play in which antagonism on the stage can charge up an audience. In this one, a graduate student in art, Evelyn (Rachel Weisz), a fire-breathing free spirit, unaccountably takes up with an overweight and maladroit undergraduate, Adam (Paul Rudd). Evelyn reshapes Adam, changing his body, his hair, his walk, his nose, convincing him that he's attractive, and soon he *is* attractive, which causes a great deal of trouble between two undergraduate friends of Adam's (Frederick Weller and Gretchen Mol) who are about to get married. The movie, in the end, is about the misuse of sexual power and the cannibalizing nature of artists, but mostly it consists of endless, nagging dialogue scenes among remarkably dislikable people.—*D.D.* (5/19/03) (Kew Gardens Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

SPELLBOUND
Jeffrey Blitz's charming documentary follows eight elementary students competing in the 1999 National Spelling Bee; he rode the bus to school with them, interviewed their teachers, checked out their rooms, and, in one case, listened while a kid talked like a robot. The sample of children is appropriately diverse—in region, in race, in the intensity of their preparations. Some of their parents see the spelling bee as representing the immigrant dream of America in miniature, while others seem amazed at the intensity of their nerdy offspring. The competitions are tense, and Blitz cobbles together a series of heartbreaking reaction shots of errant spellers. His direction shows a clever, occasionally flippant selection of detail—the dog-eared unabridged dictionaries, the congratulatory sign posted outside Hooters, the prodigy who signs his autographs "Trust in Jesus."—*M.A.* (Cinema 2, Film Forum, and Kew Gardens Cinema.)

A WOMAN IS A WOMAN
A timely rerelease for Jean-Luc Godard's near-musical of 1961. A young Parisian stripper (Anna Karina) wants to have a baby with her lover (Jean-Claude Brialy), or, failing that, with his closest friend (Jean-Paul Belmondo). That is pretty much the sum of the story, and only Godard, perhaps, would dare to spin so much from such a flimsy premise. Karina is a joy, whether she is strolling the streets, whistling at herself in the mirror, or winking in fond conspiracy at the viewer. At every turn, we brace ourselves for a song, expecting the heroine to dance her heart out, like Cyd Charisse; but she never does, and so her heart remains a little cool and mysterious. Brialy is something of a stiff, but Belmondo is as grinning and gangly as ever, and you root for him to wind up as the lucky dad. Godard was never one for uncomplicated pleasure, but this picture, in its infuriating way, is as close as he ever came. Who else could devise a scene in which a man and woman exchange views by holding up the covers of books? Look out for a cameo from Jeanne Moreau at a bar; Belmondo asks her, "How are Jules and Jim?" In French.—*A.L.* (5/26/03) (Film Forum; May 28-29.)

X2
This is the sequel to "X-Men," Bryan Singer's sleek saga of extravagantly gifted humanoids known as mutants. Early grosses suggest that Singer has repeated his success, and that there may be further installments to come. But does the source material suit an extended franchise? The plotting seems dangerously self-interested, being concerned almost exclusively with the survival of the mutants themselves, and, behind the succulent effects, the tone is oddly hectoring, instructing us to behave liberally toward these nice boys and girls whose only quirk is the ability to create thunderstorms or hurl fire. Also, the need for fresh mutants will soon overcrowd the screen. Hugh Jackman, as Wolverine, is one of the few who emerge from the picture with their dignity enhanced; by contrast, Anna Paquin, Halle Berry, and even Ian McKellen are cruelly underused. With Alan Cumming, enjoying himself to a quite illicit degree as a Teutonic devil, and Brian Cox as a neo-con mutant-hunter, whose goatee may be the most villainous effect of all.—*A.L.* (5/12/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

BLUE CAR
Angelika Film Center and Cinema 3.

CITY OF GOD (1/20/03)
Angelika Film Center.

THE IN-LAWS
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, New York Twin, and 34th Street Theatre.

NOWHERE IN AFRICA
Chelsea West, 59th Street East Cinema, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Quad Cinema.

RESPIRO
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.

SWEET SIXTEEN
Eastside Playhouse, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.

WINGED MIGRATION
Paris.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kew Gardens Cinema, 81-05 Lefferts Blvd., Queens (718-441-9835).
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (212-334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through June 8: "Finding a Place: The Films of Ang Lee." May 31 at 1:30: "Pushing Hands"

(1992). ♦ May 31 at 4:30: "The Wedding Banquet" (1993). ♦ June 1 at 1:30: "Eat Drink Man Woman" (1994; in Mandarin). ♦ June 1 at 4: "Sense and Sensibility" (1995). ♦ Repertory nights. May 31-June 1 at 6:30: "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" (1989, Terry Gilliam).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Through June 30: "Village Voice: Best of 2002." May 30 at 2 and 7: "Domestic Violence" (2002, Frederick Wiseman). ♦ May 31 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:30: "Dolls" (2002, Takeshi Kitano; in Japanese). ♦ June 1 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Millennium Mambo" (2001, Hou Hsaio-hsien; in Mandarin). ♦ June 2 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Magnificent Obsession" (1954, Douglas Sirk). ♦ June 3 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "All That Heaven Allows" (†).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—May 28-29 at 1, 2:45, 4:30, 6:15, 8, and 9:45: "A Woman Is a Woman" (†). ♦ May 30-June 3 at 1:20, 4:40, and 8: "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" (†).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-315-6160)—Joan of Arc films. June 3 at 12:30, 3:30, and 9: "Joan of Arc" (1948, Victor Fleming). ♦ June 3 at 6:30: "Joan the Woman" (1917, Cecil B. De Mille).

GRAMERCY THEATRE
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through June 2: "Movie Love in the Fifties," a series in celebration of the book by James Harvey. May 29 at 6: "Middle of the Night" (1959, Delbert Mann). ♦ May 30 at 2: "Out of the Past" (1947, Jacques Tourneur). ♦ May 30 at 4: "Angel Face" (1952, Otto Preminger). ♦ May 30 at 6 and May 31 at 1: "All I Desire" (1953, Douglas Sirk). ♦ May 30 at 8 and May 31 at 3: "There's Always Tomorrow" (1956, Sirk). ♦ May 31 at 5 and June 1 at 4:15: "The Reckless Moment" (†). ♦ May 31 at 7 and June 1 at 2: "Touch of Evil" (1958, Orson Welles). ♦ May 31 at 9: "The Goddess" (1958, John Cromwell). ♦ June 1 at 5:45 and June 2 at 6: "The Big Heat" (†). ♦ June 1 at 7:30 and June 2 at 8: "Christmas Holiday" (1944, Robert Siodmak).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. May 30-31: "Cannibal Holocaust" (1979, Ruggero Deodato).

THALIA THEATRE
Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400)—Through July 13: Sci-Fi Flick Fest. May 31 at 2 and June 1 at 6:30: "Starman" (1984, John Carpenter). ♦ May 31 at 4:15 and June 1 at 8:45: "The Brother from Another Planet" (1984, John Sayles). ♦ May 31 at 6:30 and June 1 at 2: "Men in Black" (1997, Barry Sonnenfeld). ♦ May 31 at 8:30 and June 1 at 4: "Galaxy Quest" (1999, Dean Parisot).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through May 29: "Films from Along the Silk Road." The movies are listed with their country of origin. May 28 at 1 and 9: "The Daughter-In-Law" (1972, Khodjakuli Narliev; Turkmenistan). ♦ May 28 at 3 and 7: "Orator" (2000, Yusup Razikov; Uzbekistan). ♦ May 28 at 5 and May 29 at 2 and 6: "Kairat" (1991, Darezhan Omirbaev; Kazakhstan). ♦ May 29 at 4: "Without Fear" (1972, Ali Khamraev; Uzbekistan). ♦ May 29 at 8: "The Fall of Otrar" (1990, Ardak Amirkulov; Kazakhstan). ♦ Through June 12: "Open Roads: New Italian Cinema." All films are in Italian. May 30 at 1:30 and 9:15 and May 31 at 4:15: "The Power of the Past" (2002, Piergiorgio Gay). ♦ May 30 at 4: "Ultimo Stadio" (2002, Ivano de Matteo). ♦ May 30 at 6:30 and May 31 at 1:30: "El Alamein" (2002, Enzo Monteleone). ♦ May 31 at 6:45: "Say It with My Words" (2003, Daniele Luchetti). ♦ May 31 at 9:15 and June 2 at 4: "Open My Heart" (2002, Giada Colagrande). ♦ June 1 at 1:30: "V-Max" (2002, Daniele Vicari). ♦ June 1 at 4 and June 2 at 9: "Happiness for Free" (2003, Mimmo Calopresti). ♦ June 1 at 6:15 and June 2 at 1 and 6:30: "My Name Is Tanino" (2002, Paolo Virzì). ♦ June 1 at 8:45: "Casomai" (2002, Alessandro D'Alatri).

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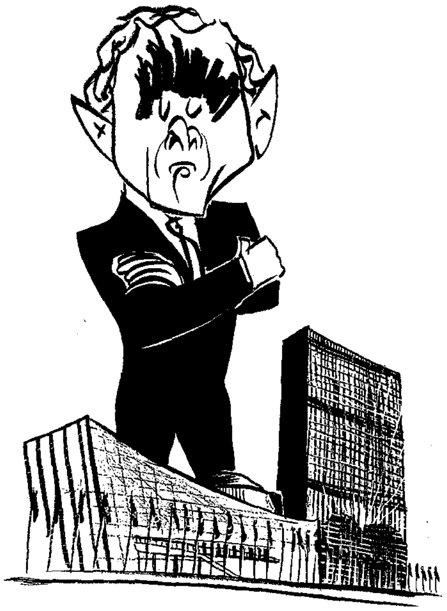
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
THE CONGO TEST

"There is but one solution—to restore the unity of the international community," Dominique de Villepin, the French foreign minister, announced last week on French radio just hours before the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1483, rescinding economic sanctions against Iraq. Given France's steadfast opposition to the invasion of Iraq, de Villepin insisted that the U.N. vote should not be understood as bestowing retroactive legitimacy on the American-led war. But, by granting the Anglo-American occupying forces a virtually unfettered dispensation over Iraq—and its oil wells—for the foreseeable future, that is exactly what the resolution does. For the Bush Administration, then, the resolution was a diplomatic triumph, and de Villepin was at pains to argue that his government's accession to it was not, by the same token, an admission of defeat. "What's really at stake here is to see to it that the U.N. is restored," he said. To be sure, he added, "There are two visions of the world"—the multilateralist, U.N.-centered vision of collective security under international law touted by France, and the unilateralist, imperial vision represented by the United States—"but we need to work together." So one hand washes the other, and, de Villepin said, "The U.N. is back."

Not so fast, Monsieur. Certainly the cessation of hostilities at the Security Council and the patching up of the ruptured transatlantic alliance merits a brief international sigh of relief. But the measure of the U.N.'s vitality will not be taken in Iraq. The true test lies in those vexed areas of the world that hold no compelling strategic or economic interest for the United States or for any of the other veto-wielding members of the Security Council. Most immediately, the U.N. is facing that test in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where seven hundred poorly armed U.N. peacekeepers in the northeastern Ituri region have watched helplessly over the past few weeks as massacres by tribal militias have filled graves with fresh corpses at about the same clip that the dead of Saddam Hussein's reign of terror have been exhumed in Iraq.



Accounts of the horror in Ituri have the quality of Hieronymus Bosch's grotesque tableaux of apocalypse: torched villages; macheted babies in the streets; stoned child warriors indulging in cannibalism and draping themselves with the entrails of their victims; peacekeepers—mostly Uruguayans—using their guns only to drive off waves of frantic civilians seeking refuge in their already overflowing compound; a quarter of a million people in frenzied flight from their homes. For nearly five years, such suffering has plagued much of the eastern Congo along the tangled battle lines of warring political and tribal factions, stirred up and spurred on by the occupying armies of neighboring Rwanda and Uganda. Hundreds of thousands of Congolese have been killed in the fighting, and many more have died as a consequence of the displacement, disease, and hunger that attend it. By any measure, Congo is one of the most hellish places on earth, and of all the hells within that hell Ituri province has come to be known as the most infernal.

The trouble in Ituri was fostered during five years of occupation by the Ugandan Army, which sought to assert control over the mineral-rich region by recklessly arming proxy militias of rival tribal groups. When massacres began in and around the provincial capital of

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

"I do intend to seek employment, but it will be at a time and place of my own choosing."

• •

Bunia, in the summer of 1999, Uganda restored a semblance of order. As this pattern repeated itself, tens of thousands of civilians were killed, and Human Rights Watch described the Ugandans as arsonists masquerading as firemen. Last December, when Congo's latest peace deal set a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign forces, everyone in Ituri predicted a bloodbath. Toward the end of April, the U.N. sent in the Uruguayans, but without the capacity to protect civilians, or even themselves. (Uganda's President, Yoweri Museveni, mocked the peacekeepers as "dangerous tourists.") The pullout came on May 6th, and, sure enough, the killing began at once, with one tribal militia overrunning Bunia, only to be driven out by another, before a tentative ceasefire was established, allowing the U.N. blue-helmets to begin counting the dead. By the end of last week, that ceasefire was breaking down.

"We've been sending messages every day to New York that this was going to happen, that we need more troops," the French commander of the U.N. peacekeepers told a reporter. "Nothing was done." This has become a routine scenario: massacres foretold, warnings ignored, slaughter erupting under the noses of U.N. forces with useless mandates. The mutilated remains of two peacekeepers were found in Bunia last week, and the commander, who has given shelter to some thirteen thousand civilians, was slashed with a machete at the gates of his compound. As Bunia burned, the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan—haunted by his failure to heed warnings of the impending genocide in Rwanda in 1994—sent a letter to the Security Council asking its members for a "rapid reaction force" to pacify the region. France, which is also tainted by complicity in the Rwandan slaughter, has said it can muster troops to maintain order until the U.N. can field a plausible force, but only on the condition that other nations join in. At least five governments have said they would consider contributing to a French-led operation. The Bush Administration has expressed support for the project but has refused to commit any troops to it.

During one of the 2000 Presidential debates, the moderator, Jim Lehrer, raised the issue of Rwanda. "There was no U.S. intervention," he said. Then he asked George W. Bush, "Was that a mistake?" In a rare show of solidarity with the Clinton White House, Bush answered, "I think the Administration did the right thing in that case. I do. It was a horrible situation. No one liked to see it on our—you know, on our TV screens. But . . . they made the right decision not to send U.S. troops into Rwanda." In the run-up to the Iraq war, it appeared that Bush had changed his mind. Speaking on Al Jazeera television, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice dismissed the U.N.'s opposition to the invasion of Iraq by reminding her interviewer, "The U.N. Security Council could not act when in Rwanda there was a genocide that cost almost a million lives. There was a very poignant statement by the President of Rwanda recently when he said sometimes the Security Council is not right when it does not act. President Bush believes that, too." And, lest the mantle of the memory of Rwanda's dead be wasted on only Arab audiences, the White House spokesman, Ari Fleischer, struck the same note: "From a moral point of view, as the world witnessed in Rwanda . . . the U.N. Security Council will have failed to act once again." The disingenuousness of these remarks lies, of course, in the fact that it was the United States that prevented the Security Council from acting during the Rwandan genocide, even though no American troops were ever involved or required for the U.N. force there.

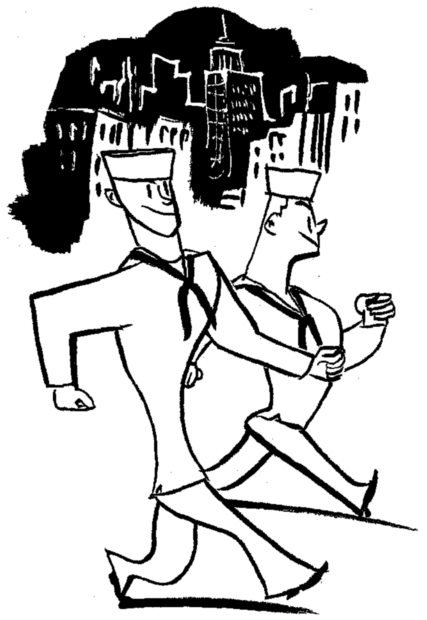
As Dominique de Villepin observed, the international order hangs suspended these days between two competing visions, each of which justifies itself by pointing to the limitations, failures, and abuses of the other. The people of Ituri couldn't care less about those debates, as they plead for salvation. It is for such people and such places—places that nobody in what Kofi Annan likes to call "governments with capacity" can find any political grounds to care about—

that the U.N.'s system of international humanitarian law matters most. The idea behind that system is that common humanity ought to be reason enough to take an interest in preventing such terrors as extermination campaigns. And the premise behind that idea is that, while action may be costly, the price of inaction must finally be greater. But is that really how the world works? What if the ultimate horror of the Congo nightmare is that there is no price for ignoring it?

—*Philip Gourevitch*

HOMELAND
THE WEEK IN WALKS

The recent revelation that the Defense Department may soon be using radar surveillance to monitor the way we walk, in an attempt to identify terrorists through their "gait signatures," was alarming not only to diehard civil libertarians but also to skulkers, stumblers, and zigzaggers everywhere. Researchers at Georgia Tech, sponsored by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, have reported a success rate of between eighty and ninety-five per cent in identifying individuals simply by their gaits, and they hope before long to increase the accuracy to "the high ninety percent range," as one researcher, Jon Geisheimer, noted in a press release. "We need technology to find the bad guys at a distance," he said.



This news happened to accompany vague F.B.I. warnings of a possible "devastating attack" on New York, Boston, Washington, and, perplexingly, the nation's beaches (by jellyfish? tidal waves? fat hairy men with kadima paddles?). New York, at least, was once again on edge. Military units descended on the city, along with an intermittent rain. Urged by President Bush to "be alert," people couldn't be faulted for succumbing to the impulse to scrutinize the gaits of their fellow-citizens, though, in the absence of radar technology, their findings were preliminary, at best.

On Tuesday, passengers aboard an Amtrak train from Washington to Boston grew suspicious of a man lurching in the aisles with a peculiar plastic jug. Train service was suspended for a couple of hours—and part of Penn Station was shut down—until the authorities determined that the man in question, a Liberian immigrant, was just carrying cooking oil. At Penn Station the next day, Army National Guardsmen, in combat boots and full camouflage, with M16s slung over their right shoulders, patrolled the corridors. Their gait was distinctive—an almost bowlegged, gunslinger's waddle, a result, presumably, of the stuffed pouches and pockets that hung like saddlebags from their pants.

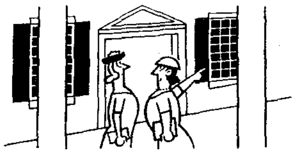
At around 2 P.M., a green suitcase attracted attention, mainly for being unattached to anyone with a gait to be wary of. Officers from the N.Y.P.D. Emergency Service Unit, wearing helmets and carrying machine guns, converged on it, accompanied by a bomb-sniffing dog. Another false alarm. The cops retreated stiffly (tight chin straps) to their post near the train-information board and looked on as a call went out for the 2:29 to Oyster Bay, setting off a small commuter stampede. The officers' eyes began dancing from side to side in rapid gait-scan mode. No terrorists in this batch.

Upstairs, in the Theatre at Madison Square Garden, the commencement ceremony for the New School was about to begin. On Seventh Avenue, ushers in purple gowns sorted approaching pedestrians into two categories: graduating students ("This way, please. Report to the Expo Center for marching instructions") and guests ("Keep walking toward the box office"). The former were recognizable both for their hurried pace and, in roughly half the cases, for a tottering that suggested an unfamiliarity with high heels. This called into question the assertion by one of the researchers at Georgia Tech that "a woman switching from flats to high heels probably wouldn't change her signature significantly." (As Jeffrey Boyd, the co-author of the seminal walking paper "Recognizing People by Their Gait," said last week, "It's pretty clear that changing footwear does change gaits. Put a pebble in one shoe, you're going to walk a little funny.") At any rate, there seemed to be little to fear here.

Several hours passed without incident. After midnight, along the sidewalks west of Times Square, Navy personnel could be identified, with about eighty-to-ninety-five-per-cent accuracy, by their inability to walk in a straight line. These military men, ashore for Fleet Week, were not on active security duty ("We're here to party," Kenny, from the U.S.S. Yorktown, announced), and they still seemed to be listing, tacking, and even coming about, but they, too, were keeping a vigilant eye on the movements of those around them. Outside Smith's Bar and Restaurant, on Forty-fourth Street, each passing female drew stares from the crew of the U.S.S. Philippine Sea, and if her gait, viewed from behind, passed muster, one of the sailors would call out, "Where have you been all my life?"

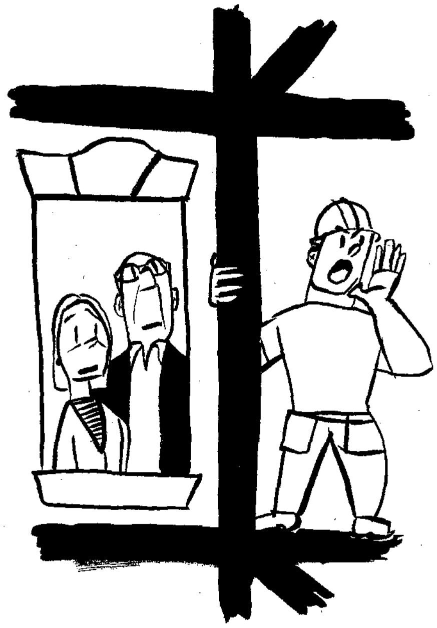
—*Ben McGrath*

DEPT. OF CONSTRUCTION
VIEWS



In recent months, Hudson River strollers and Henry Hudson Parkway drivers may have noticed a banner hanging between the seventh- and eighth-story windows of the Chatsworth, the old Beaux-Arts apartment building on Seventy-second Street at the foot of Riverside Park. The banner reads "TrumpPlaceIsChokingUs.com," and it refers to the Chatsworth's campaign against the progressive encroachment of the not very Beaux-Arts apartment building going up next door, at Trump Place. Two weeks ago, the banner disappeared when the new Trump project, now seven stories tall and destined to be thirty-one, choked it out, too.

The mood in the Chatsworth these days recalls "The Cask of Amontillado," the Edgar Allan Poe story about a man who is sealed, stone by stone, inside a basement crypt. Richard Seader, a Chatsworth resident since 1961 (back when Irving Berlin had already moved out and Conan O'Brien hadn't yet moved in), was home last week, acclimating himself to his darkening apartment. "We never needed the light on during the day, and all of a sudden you can't see without it," he said. He recalled how he'd gone out in the morning, a week before, to do some errands and returned that afternoon to "blackness."



When Seader, a retired Broadway producer, first moved into his sixth-floor apartment, the view from the window in the kitchen looked out across the river to Weehawken and beyond. Now it looks out at the little bit of blue sky that peeks between concrete pilings, two-by-fours, and big guys in hard hats and T-shirts. Soon it will be gone altogether. You could barely fit a Sunday *Times* between the wall of Trump Place and Seader's fire escape—a safety hazard, Chatsworthians fear.

To show off a different Chatsworthian perspective, Seader rode the elevator upstairs to the tenth floor, to the spacious, light-filled apartment of his friends Henry and Marcia Saltzman. Henry looked out his dining-room window and, measuring with his fingers and counting imaginary floors, estimated that Trump Place would overtake his river view within a month. He seemed resigned to it.

"I mean, nobody owns the view in New York," he said.

"There's nothing you can do about it. What can you do about it?" Marcia said. "But I am spoiled."

As it happens, the Saltzmans have had a view-rich life together, though they grew up view-poor in Flatbush. ("We're two Brooklyn kids who had no views, except on politics, science . . .") But they have lived, for example, in Riverdale, in the Bronx, in an amphitheatre-shaped building that fanned out toward the Hudson, facing the Palisades.

"It was a beautiful view," Marcia said.

"We called our building Shea Stadium on the Hudson, the way it was designed," Henry said.

"Incredible," Marcia said.

Before that, they lived high in an Upper East Side apartment, overlooking Hell Gate.

"The view was fine," Marcia said.

"The location was good," Henry said. "It was one of the first buildings out there."

"It was like living in a college dormitory. There were six young people coming out of one apartment every morning to go to Wall Street," Marcia said.

They were view-spoiled even when they lived briefly overseas. "It was old Wassenaar, a suburb of The Hague," Henry said. "And we overlooked a beautiful, classic pond."

"A pond. Beautiful!" Marcia said.

"With a classic windmill and the beds of flowers," Henry said.

"With the ducks," Marcia said.

They set off on a quick view-savoring tour of the apartment, as Seader looked past them toward the river, which was blue and flecked with whitecaps.

"Oh, what I put into this place," Marcia said.

"Well, we'll see what the landlord says," Henry said.

"I'm moving," Marcia said.

"We're *leaning* toward moving," Henry said. "It's the darkling plain. I've stolen that from Matthew Arnold."

A little while later, in the elevator heading back downstairs, Richard Seader was quiet. "I'd miss Hank and Marcia," he finally said. "My wife and I enjoy them."

—*Robert Sullivan*

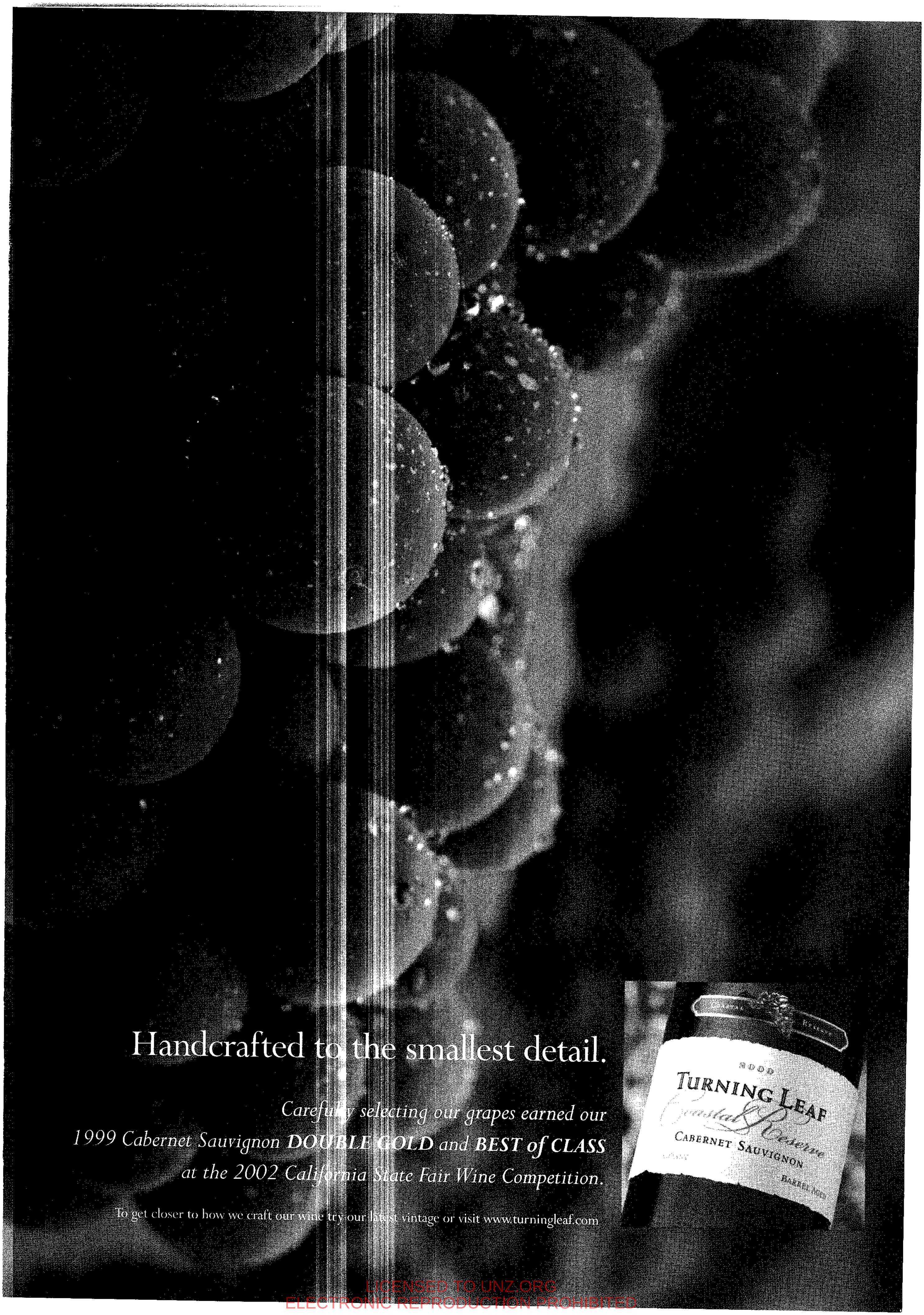
REMEMBRANCE

THE AL HIRSCHFELD

Al Hirschfeld, the great caricaturist, was to have reached the magic age of one hundred on June 21st. Myriad celebrations were planned, the culmination to be the renaming of the Martin Beck Theatre the Al Hirschfeld Theatre. Death stepped in on January 20th, when Al died at home in his sleep. But, since Hirschfeld was Hirschfeld, only the centerpiece of the festivities will be gone. The Martin Beck will become the Hirschfeld on June 23rd. Since I can no longer talk to Al (we talked all the time), I have done the next best thing: I have had a chat with his wife, Louise Kerz Hirschfeld, a beautiful woman in her sixties. She came to see me the other day, and it was obvious that she has inherited one of Al's most mysterious traits: regardless of traffic or municipal mayhem on the streets, Al always managed to park exactly where he wanted to park, right in front of where he was going. One might consider this some sort of extraterrestrial intervention, or just good luck, but whatever it was it always worked.

Mrs. H. was eager to talk about Al. Hiding her sorrow, she seemed calm and collected. "He felt so tired that Sunday that I suggested he stay in bed. This was not easy for Al. He lived for his work, and the notion of not climbing to the fourth floor of our lovely house on East Ninety-fifth Street, and sitting back in his old barber chair, and beginning to draw seemed strange to him. But he followed my advice. He was propped up against the pillows and making strange circular motions with one empty hand—circles and lines and dots and faces. He was *drawing* something: we will never know what.

"Al always said that he had been down every street in the city of New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York, with a special, odd affection for the borough of Queens," she went on. "He always had special ways of getting out of the city—weird shortcuts from the Harlem River Drive, through a crowded commercial district, and onto the New York State Thruway. He loved to point out a cliff he used to climb as a boy on what is now the Harlem Drive. In the old days, his closest friends were Brooks Atkinson, drama critic of the *Times*, Alexander King, the writer, and Paul Osborn, whose plays he loved. But his favorite writer of all was Thoreau, and we printed a Thoreau passage on the funeral program that read, in part, 'There was an artist . . . who was disposed to strive after perfection. . . . As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him.'

"Al never talked about death—he made no plans, none of that. He lived for every day. He once did a great drawing of Houdini—all bound and chained—and I often felt that Al was like Houdini, bound and chained to his work, from which he would miraculously emerge. Theatre totally fascinated and consumed him. His favorite plays were 'Long Day's Journey Into Night' and 'Death of a Salesman.' Of course, he knew O'Neill—the two of them would haunt the jazz spots on Fifty-second Street. The fact that a theatre was to be named in his honor almost overwhelmed him. Arthur Gelb, the *Times* eminence, and I went and told him the news. 'It's a great honor, but I won't speak,' he said. 'Just take a bow.' To see Al at a theatre was an uplifting experience. He became like a boy. The look of expectancy on his face before the curtain rose simply cannot be described.

"He didn't ever want to be bored. Hence, he was always trying for something new. If you asked him what was his favorite drawing, he would always say, 'The last one that I did.' "

—*Philip Hamburger*

THE LONG TRAIL OF DECEPTION

I cannot tell you why I did it. That is going to require a long process of self-examination and, very likely, a large amount of psychotherapy. All I can do is try to come clean. An internal investigation has revealed that I have committed a profound betrayal of trust and done great damage to a sacred but fragile bond, that between a boyfriend and his girlfriend. The true extent of the damage I have done is unknown, although it clearly represents a low point in the fifty-thousand-year history of relationships between men and women.

This inquiry shows that I flouted the cardinal tenets and long-established rules of relationships, and that the fabrications, lies, fictions, and factual errors that I committed are more extensive than anyone could have known. Except myself, of course. The elements of my deception were a cell phone, the Kinko's on Astor Place, and an energetic but perhaps overly ambitious desire to get attractive women to have sex with me.

First, Susan: I did not, as I claimed, graduate from Harvard. Nor was I ever enrolled there. This might have been made clear when you mentioned Cambridge, and I let it slip that I'd never been to England—though that last part, the investigation has shown, is true. But the warning signs were not heeded. Further, when you asked me to accompany you to the wedding of your incredibly boring cousin Leanne, in Ohio of all places, I was not, as I declared, obliged to attend the Oscars. Phone conversations with friends show that I spent that entire weekend in New York, watching a "Real World Marathon" on MTV. The goody bag I presented to cover my tracks was actually filled with items from the 99¢ Depot. My ruddy skin tone, consistent with a visit to California, was the result of an ordinary over-the-counter self-tanner.

Jessica: I did not, as I purported to, "serve valiantly" in Vietnam. Birth records indicate that I was only nine years old when the war ended, and discussions with my mother reveal that I am afraid of loud noises. The realistic and vivid details that I incorporated into my wrenching account of the war were lifted almost entirely from "First Blood." Accordingly, the reason I was out of work was not, as I said, "because of post-traumatic stress disorder." Psychologists interviewed for this article say that it is relatively rare to get PTSD from viewing "First Blood."

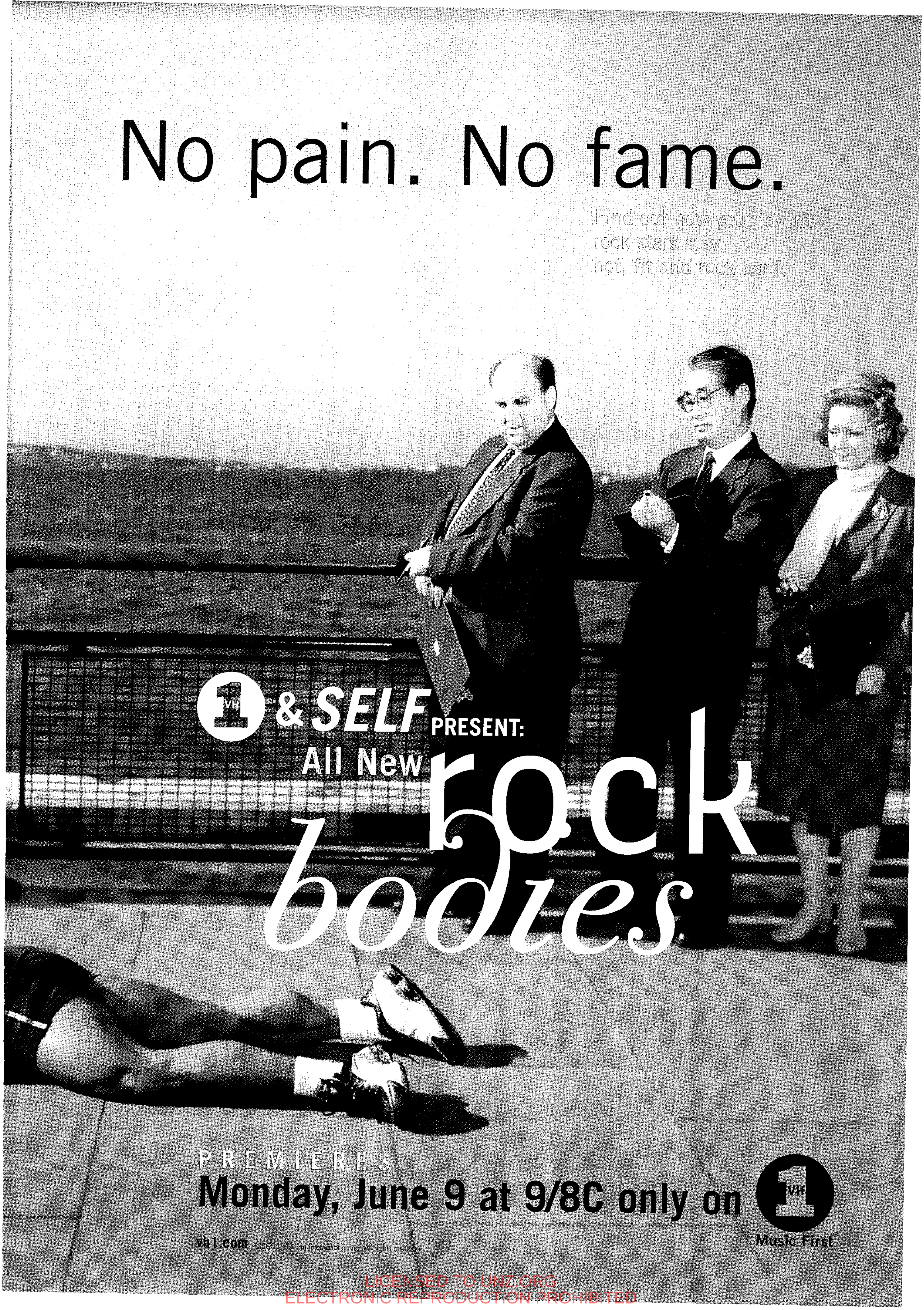
Maggy: My name is Stephen, not Gianni. I am not from "Firenze," and I am not a race-car driver. Sources close to me say that I do not even feel comfortable with a stick shift.

Kristen: I am not a "close personal friend" of Keanu Reeves. I have, in fact, never even met him. This trail of fraud began when you expressed your great admiration for Mr. Reeves, and I said that he and I "hang out" on frequent occasions. The person who subsequently phoned and told you to tell me "Keanu called" was actually Dave. That's why the caller I.D. on your phone said "Davehome." My claim that this was because "Dave and Keanu are also really good friends and Keanu really likes Dave's phone" was also, in retrospect, a falsehood. In addition, I slept with your sister.

Heather: I did not invent the phrase "What up, dawg?" Nor do I get paid money every time somebody says it. When you expressed doubt about this, the "Official Letter of Phrase Ownership" that I received an hour later from the Patent Office was actually generated from my Powerbook, and printed on your printer. Also, the reason I would not introduce you to my parents was not that I had murdered my father and slept with my mother. That account was plagiarized from another writer. My own parents are happily married and living in Phoenix. When reached by a reporter, they were surprised, and saddened, to hear this untruthful account.

In any case, I hope this can be a learning process for all of us. Yes, there could have been greater safeguards. And, clearly, there was a critical breakdown in communication. Some have suggested that my "considerable personal problems" may have been a factor. Others feel that a heightened vigilance and skepticism are in order. But I would caution that too much suspicion might interfere with the creative atmosphere that enables men to persuade women to have sex with them. That would be a tragedy.

—*Stephen Sherrill*



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LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA

REMAKE MAN

Roy Lee brings Asia to Hollywood, and finds some enemies along the way.

BY TAD FRIEND

One afternoon last winter, the movie producer Roy Lee sat in a taupe wing chair in the bar of Raffles L'Ermitage, a hotel in Beverly Hills, posed as if for a formal portrait. A thirty-four-year-old Korean-American in a nearly all-white industry, Lee is keenly aware of the impression he wants to make. Only his splayfooted walk is unstudied; everything else about him is clean, modern, contained. In Lee's business letters, the paragraphs are all five lines long, for maximum tidiness and impact. He recently considered putting his black Mercedes in a garage and buying a scooter for his five-minute commute but, after reviewing the mental image of himself in a helmet, decided against it. He had three meetings lined up at L'Ermitage that day, and he was dressed in a short-sleeved black knit Donna Karan shirt and dark-tan Donna Karan chinos. His bedroom closet currently contains only Donna Karan; in the coming year, he says, he intends to wear only John Varvatos. Two years ago, Lee dropped thirty pounds and got rid of most of his possessions.

What Lee does for a living sounds simple enough, but no one in Hollywood had thought of it before. He watches videos of every Asian movie ever made, picks the biggest hits, and then, on behalf of their Asian distributors, sells the "remake rights" of those films to studios here, so that they can be turned into big-budget American spectacles. Lee got into this work in 2001, after seeing a Japanese horror film called "Ringu," about a videotape that kills everyone who watches it. With Lee serving as an intermediary, DreamWorks bought the remake rights from the Japanese for a million dollars, and "The Ring" went on to become a surprise hit last fall, earning more than a hundred and twenty-nine million dollars domestically. Although Lee doesn't speak Japanese, Chinese, or Korean, in the past two years he has helped American studios option the remake rights to an additional seventeen Asian movies. "Roy is the go-to guy for Asia," Julien Thuan, an agent at United Talent Agency, says. "He knows the right people, he knows what's going to be happening in a year, and he's voraciously aggressive." Lee created and cornered his market by merging two traditional Hollywood success stories: that of the obsessive video-store clerk (Kevin Smith, Quentin Tarantino) with that of the hard-nosed immigrants who founded the business nearly a century ago (Samuel Goldwyn, Jack and Harry Warner, Louis B. Mayer).

The first person Lee would be meeting at L'Ermitage was Taka Ichise, one of the producers of "Ringu." "Taka is known as a bully in Japan," Lee said, "but he's nice to me, because I made him a fortune." Taka, a sturdy, bullet-headed man in his mid-forties, bowed to Lee, shook his hand, and sat down. He had brought a female translator with him, and he was wearing a shirt that featured a print of black women's hairdos and the legend "Afro Coiffures."

After a few seconds of small talk, Lee said, "Well, what's next?"

"First is 'Ju-On II,' in January," Taka said. His haunted-house film "Ju-On," or "The Grudge," had recently been a hit in Japan.

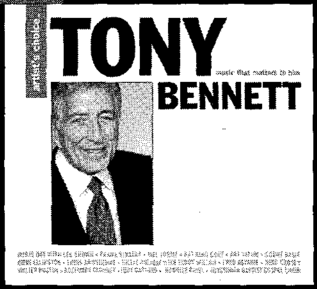
"What's the story?" Lee asked.

Taka shrugged. "Oh, it's just the sequel. It's like 'Friday the 13th—Part 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.' " He laughed mirthlessly.

"I haven't seen 'Ju-On,' " Lee said, "but in the video"—an earlier Japanese straight-to-video prequel that spawned "Ju-On"—"the ghost just appeared whenever. There weren't any rules. We need films with rules. Rules and hooks, like a videotape that kills people."

"Japanese horror movies are not logical," Taka said. "Logical horror movies fail. I will make ten movies next year," he continued. "Six by Japan's top-six horror directors, each film costing one million dollars. Do you know anyone who would invest?"

"I just had lunch with some Chi-



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nese money," Lee told him a few minutes later. "I should get you in touch with Gareth Wigan, a top guy at Sony. He's been investing in mini-studios in places like Spain."

"Sony?" Taka said. "Sony Pictures Japan are fucking idiots." (Taka's translator, after a slight pause, rendered this as "old stupids.")

Taka liked Lee's first notion better. "I'm screening 'Ju-On' tomorrow night for Sam Raimi," Lee said, referring to the director of "Spider-Man" and numerous horror films. "He's hot right now. If he wants to produce it, he could get it remade in a second."

"Raimi's 'Evil Dead' was very good," Taka said. He laughed again. "Gave us many ideas." There is no reason that Taka couldn't take his film directly to Sam Raimi; he might well make more money by cutting Lee out of the transaction. But Taka doesn't know Sam Raimi. Lee doesn't know Raimi, either, but he does know Nathan Kahane, a thirty-year-old executive who is working with Raimi to produce a slate of horror films. Lee knows all the Nathan Kahanes.

In many ways, Hollywood seems to exemplify the most joyless aspects of capitalism. The "industry," as it insists upon calling itself, packages artistic ideas and images as commodities and then values those commodities according to how they "penetrate" markets, support "platforms" of ancillary commodities (tie-in Burger King action figures), and "brand" a company as a reliable purveyor of similar commodities.

The system's besetting inefficiency, of course, is that studios never know what moviegoers will want to buy. So films are tested in front of preview audiences, revised according to the audience's suggestions, tested again, and then marketed with a vigor directly proportionate to the test scores. There are two problems with this approach. The first is that the test-sample size is minuscule—two hundred mall walkers in Canoga Park, California, can determine a movie's fate. The second is that by the time the Canoga Park test audience sees a film it's too late to change it very much anyway, particularly when twenty, fifty, or a hundred million dollars has already been spent.

Roy Lee's Asian initiative enables Hollywood, in effect, to test fully realized cinematic ideas in front of millions of people, and then go forward with remakes of movies that are already proven hits. Everyone benefits: Asian studios get a windfall; American studios get a buffet of market-tested ideas; and Lee gets a producer's fee in the range of three hundred thousand dollars whenever one of his remakes goes into production. DreamWorks took "Ringu," a movie that originally cost $1.2 million, and spent forty million dollars on the remake, keeping the creepiest elements of the original film, and streamlining and sweetening the story. DreamWorks stripped out a lot of the film's paranormal texture; its moody, quintessentially Japanese rainfall; and its periodic references to "brine and goblins." Then the studio added a few eye-popping special effects. In Japan, "Ringu" made $6.6 million; "The Ring" made $8.3 million there in its first two weeks.

"I go with what makes me angry," Lee says. Photograph by Martin Schoeller.

CORBIS SABA

Lee's next meeting at L'Ermitage that afternoon was with Caldecot (Cotty) Chubb, a middle-aged, gum-chewing man who recently helped produce the Kurt Russell drama "Dark Blue." Before Chubb arrived, Lee said, "Cotty fired me from my first job out here." And now, he seemed to be saying, he's courting me. Chubb sat down and spun out a penetrating disquisition on how "The Ring"—whose main characters are a single mother and her sensitive son—was really a movie about the trauma of divorce.

Lee's arms were folded. "I have no idea what you're talking about," he said.

Chubb blinked and got to the point, asking if Lee had any potential remakes that would suit the writers and actors he was trying to "service," as he put it, such as Ashton Kutcher, the star of "Dude, Where's My Car?" and "Just Married."

"I don't even remember what I'm working on," Lee told him. "Whatever I happen to see that week, I just send out to people." Chubb eyed him to see if he was kidding; he wasn't. "I go with what people tell me to go for," Lee continued. "I was working with a Warner Bros. producer on another movie and he mentioned a French movie, 'The Man on the Train,' which he said had one great comedic moment. So I went out and got the rights to 'The Man on the Train' and sold them to Warners.” (Actually, Lee has not yet concluded the deal.)

“Had you seen it?”

“Not at that point.”

“Roy, you are amazing,” Chubb said uneasily.

Lee’s third meeting was with Jason Filardi, the screenwriter of the recent hit comedy “Bringing Down the House,” which stars Steve Martin and Queen Latifah. “I loved the trailer for ‘In the House,’ ” said Lee, whose grasp of titles is often approximate. “My assistant, Gabriel, watched some documentary about ‘whales,’ these really rich guys who get comped to everything in Vegas,” Lee continued. “He came up with a ‘Trading Places’ idea about this poor black guy, like a Bernie Mac or Ice Cube, who gets mistaken for a big player and is comped by the whale hunter, who’s like a Ben Stiller, nervous guy. I sold it to New Line, and I’d love for you to write it.”

“Off the hook!” Filardi exclaimed.

Lee began hawking his Asian remake possibilities. “I forgot to bring you this review of ‘Saving My Hubby,’ ” he said. “Terrible title, but it’s a Korean movie about a woman kicking ass in the ’hood, supposedly modelled on some Greek mythology thing about a woman entering somewhere and doing something. Maybe we could do that as a remake, setting it up for Queen Latifah.”

“Yeah, she wants to do a kick-ass, driving-Harleys-and-shooting-guns kind of thing,” Filardi said. A jittery, good-looking young man, he wore a gray cashmere V-neck sweater with no shirt under it and a thumb ring. “I had drinks with Daryl Hannah a few weeks ago,” he went on. “Dude, she looks *good*.”

“She looks *old*,” Lee said.

“I don’t know, it was kinda dark,” Filardi said, almost purring. “Kinda dark . . . in my bedroom.”

Lee smiled. Filardi said, “And what’s up with us doing a spring-break movie? Like, a fresh-faced F.B.I. agent has to go undercover and solve a crime at a fraternity during spring break.”

“I’d love to do a spring-break movie,” Lee said. “Could you do it for Ashton Kutcher? Ashton Kutcher goes to Daytona Beach?”

Lee’s brain often seems to work like the accounting system known as LIFO, for Last In, First Out. “I never have set goals,” he told me after Filardi had left. “Everyone thinks of me as a producer of remakes, but that could mutate tomorrow depending on who I meet and what they suggest I do. I’d compare myself to Forrest Gump.”

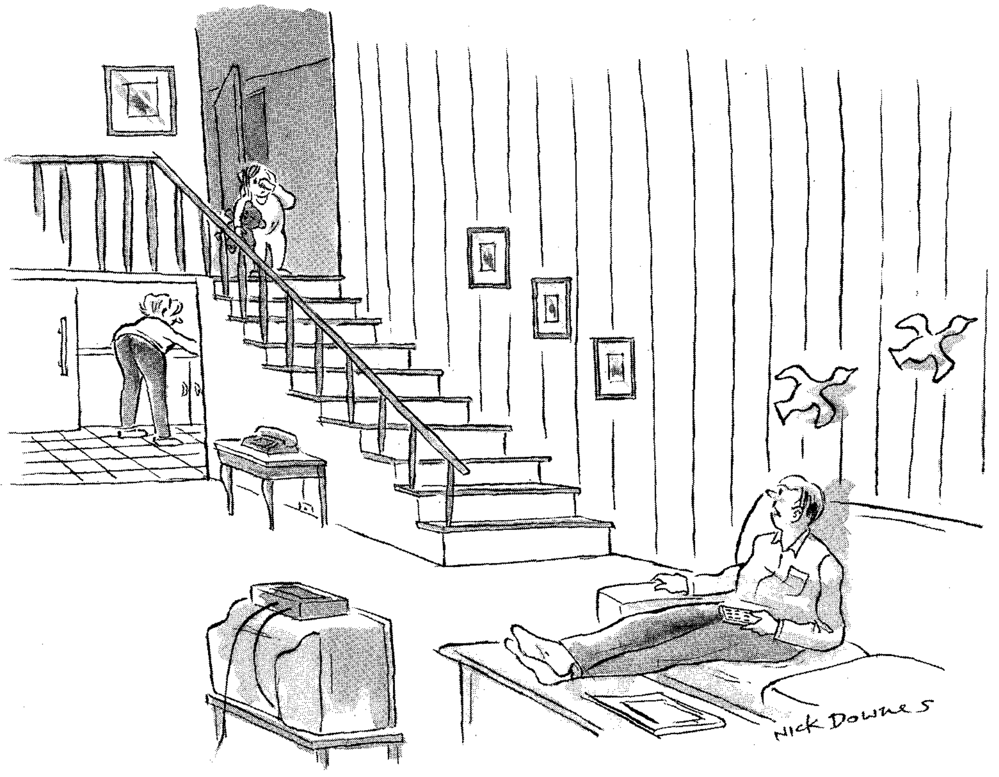
Lee trusts the constant evolution of his interests because it is the market’s evolution. “It’s good that I didn’t know film history, that I’d never seen a Hitchcock film until I moved out here,” he said. His favorite movies include “The Matrix” and “Joe Versus the Volcano.” “All films seem new to me, just like they do to ninety per cent of filmgoers today,” he continued. “I’m young, I like commercial fare, and I get bored easily. I am the target audience.”

Hollywood is filled with young men and women who share Roy Lee’s dreams. J. C. Spink, a thirty-year-old talent manager and producer who was Lee’s employer for almost two years, told me, “You come in with the thousand people in your group who will all kill to get ahead. Twenty years later, only twenty people are left standing, and they’re running the town. You all screwed each other over plenty, so you kind of hate each other, but, at the same time, you’re in this crazy dysfunctional family where you have to coexist.”

Lee’s office at Vertigo Entertainment, the company that he co-founded a couple of years ago with a young producer named Doug Davison, is a bare, though comfortable, concrete cell. Its most notable furniture is a plasma-screen television and a cooler stocked with Red Bull energy drinks. At his apartment nearby, in Beverly Hills, the rooms are almost empty and the walls are hung with paintings of empty rooms. Lee has an overpowering fear of cockroaches: until he got married, a few months ago, his kitchen contained no pots or food.

His obsessiveness is not merely a business tool; it is a stamp of character. For months at a time, Lee will eat only one kind of food. “Roy went through a macaroni-and-cheese phase where he bought hundreds of boxes and ate it all day long,” Robynne Reitnauer, a longtime friend of his, said. “Then it was instant oatmeal. He discovers something he likes and goes with it until it makes him nauseous.”

“Roy thinks like a studio exec,” says Mark Morgan, the president of Maverick Films, who helped Lee set up



“A story? Honey, wouldn’t you rather a mild sedative?”

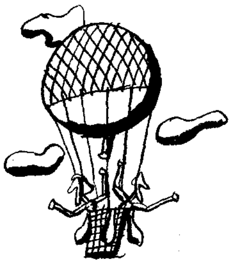
a Korean-comedy remake, “My Sassy Girl,” at DreamWorks last year. The film, one of Lee’s favorites, is a romance about a young man who rescues a pretty but very drunk young woman on the subway; she turns out to be a bossy brat who constantly slaps him around. “He brought ‘My Sassy Girl’ to me because I have experience with romantic comedies,” Morgan went on. “Or, as he said, in Roy-speak, ‘Because you like pussy movies.’ He’s not trying to shove some weird love story he’s had a passion for since he was six down the studios’ throats. A mind-set like Roy’s isn’t going to get you a lot of ‘American Beauty’s, but it will get you a lot of ‘Spider-Man’s.”

Lee was born in 1969 at Wyckoff Heights hospital, in Brooklyn. His father, a doctor, and his mother, a devout Christian, had been in America for just three years and were still trying to fit in; his mother asked the nurse for a good, short American name, and she suggested Roy.

The Lees moved to Bethesda, Maryland, when Roy was three. In school, he was self-conscious about his name (a neighborhood kid called him Soy) and his appearance (another boy, in high school, would tug down the folds of his eyes and chant, “I dropped a bomb on you!”). Lee’s mother nurtured hopes that he would become a minister. Lee told me that the first time he went to a movie was when his mother took him to see “The Exorcist.” “It was almost a traumatic experience,” he said. “Her idea was to put the fear of God into me.” Lee’s mother doesn’t remember this, and his older brother, Yong Lee, who is now a psychiatrist, said, “My mother didn’t take us to the movies; it was my uncle. The first movie I remember us seeing was ‘Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo.’ ”

Lee was often embarrassed by his parents’ behavior. His mother insisted, for example, on attaching tennis-ball halves to the bottoms of her kitchen-chair legs, so that they wouldn’t scratch the linoleum. When Lee started driving, he would remove the yarn-and-Popsicle-stick crucifixes she kept hanging from the car’s rearview mirror. When Lee went to Hollywood, his mother says, “I told him, ‘Don’t make horrible, scary movies; make a good and religious movie.’ He just laughed.”

As an adolescent, Lee was determined to be popular, and he kept up with the latest hit films and songs. He would later tell close friends the story of what happened when he was in the tenth grade and a classmate shot him in the ankle with a BB gun. “I was mad,” Lee told me. So he went to the gunman’s garage and unscrewed the lug nuts on one of the front tires of his car. The driver was unhurt in the resulting crash, but the car’s axle broke. The police questioned Lee, but they didn’t have enough evidence to prosecute.



As an undergraduate at George Washington University, Lee did an internship at the Washington bureau of the law firm Fried Frank Harris Shriver & Jacobson. He began a self-improvement program in which he read a book a day, working his way through the best-seller list, from Douglas Adams to Stephen King. “Roy had a bunch of hard-partying friends,” Yong recalls, “and when he decided to buckle down he threw them all a big party around Christmastime. At the end of the night, he said, ‘I hope you’ve all had a great time. Because in the new year I don’t want to see any of you again.’ He told me this, thinking I’d be proud of him and his resolve, and I said, ‘That’s terrible!’ He said, ‘The difference between you and me is you’re too chicken. I’ll do what I have to do to get ahead.’ ”

While attending law school at American University, Lee tried his hand at screenwriting. His approach was methodical: he transcribed “Pulp Fiction,” rewriting the script virtually line by line, creating what he called “a whole new movie.” He sent a talent agency a “Seinfeld” script that he had refreshed in this manner, but nothing came of it.

Nonetheless, in 1996, after graduating and working at Fried Frank for eight months, he quit and drove his Honda Prelude to Los Angeles. “I wanted to reinvent myself in a different city, far away,” he says. Lee was twenty-seven. He soon got a job as a “tracker” at a production company called Alphaville, where his boss was Cotty Chubb. Trackers spend their days calling other trackers, trading information on available scripts. Lee had a brainstorm: why not put the whole information bourse on a Web site, as Fried Frank had done internally with its caseload server? In 1997, Lee set up an Internet bulletin board, called Tracker, for twenty of his friends, who logged and rated the scripts they read.

Within six months, Lee had established twenty-five similar online groups for other young trackers. Since he was the only member of each group, he had the best information of all. When the screenplay for “American Beauty” was being tracked at a furious rate, Lee called his friend Mark Sourian, a young assistant at DreamWorks, to tell him that he hadn’t read the script himself but that it looked hot. Sourian was the first to alert his boss, and after several other executives had read the script DreamWorks wound up making the film.

Lee’s new system basically killed the “spec script” market, in which marquee writers such as Shane Black and Joe Eszterhas commanded multimillion-dollar sums for original screenplays. Before Tracker, a writer’s agent could submit a script to a producer in secret, and with a short response deadline, to try to force a large bid. Often, a producer or a studio believed it was getting such a script first, when it had already been rejected elsewhere. Now all it took was one twenty-three-year-old typing “It sucks” on a tracking Web site and that script was dead.

In 1999, Lee went to work for Benderspink, a talent-management company owned by two of his friends, Chris Bender and J. C. Spink. He was charged with finding Internet content: short films that would play on personal computers. Two years later, when the Internet bubble popped, Lee started looking for feature films to produce and came across Taka Ichise’s “Ringu.”

But exactly how that happened is a matter of dispute. Lee says that he was given “Ringu” by two different friends in January of 2001, and became obsessed with it. He says he checked to see that the rights were available, then showed the tape to Mark Sourian, who was by then a DreamWorks executive, and who immediately persuaded the studio to buy the remake rights for a million dollars.

But a remake of “Ringu” had been in development at Fine Line Features, at least until January of 2001, when the executive in charge of the project, Mike Macari, was laid off. Macari says that he had shown "Ringu" to Lee, a close friend, much earlier. After he was laid off, Macari planned to shop "Ringu" around, and he asked Benderspink to act as his agent in selling the film. That's when Lee, as Benderspink's employee, got involved and showed the tape to Sourian.

Macari and his partner had understood that they would be the film's producers. But when DreamWorks' Walter Parkes and Laurie MacDonald decided that they wanted to produce the film, the resulting reshuffle left Macari with a lesser credit than Lee. Macari says that when he called Lee to ask about this, Lee said, "Fuck you, you're lucky to even be involved in this thing," and hung up. Macari called Lee repeatedly. He even messengered over a set of eight lug nuts with a note: "I've already removed my lug nuts. Please call me back." Lee refused to speak to Macari for fourteen months.

"Roy Lee didn't find 'Ringu,' " J. C. Spink says. "Mike Macari found 'Ringu.' If it weren't for him, it would still be sitting in a warehouse in Japan."

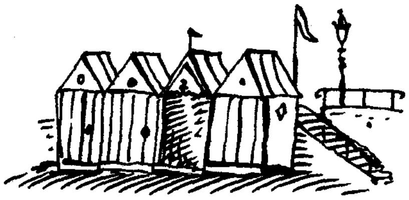
When Lee heard that people had been disputing his version of events, he tried to get Macari to change his story. (His tactics included threatening to circulate mug shots from a drunken-driving arrest involving Macari.) After a few weeks, Lee finally admitted, "I guess Mike deserves some credit." (Ultimately, Macari and Lee were both listed as "executive producers" of "The Ring.")

After "The Ring" went into production at DreamWorks, there was suddenly a great deal of interest in Hideo Nakata, the man who directed "Ringu." Nakata became the focus of Lee's energies. In addition to "Ringu," he had directed "Dark Water," a horror film about an apartment building where it keeps raining indoors, which Lee sold for five hundred and fifty thousand dollars. And Lee teamed with two other production companies to get Universal Studios to buy the remake rights to Nakata's stylish thriller "Chaos," about a handyman who helps a woman arrange her fake kidnapping only to find out that it's real and she's dead. (The remake is being developed for Robert De Niro and Benicio Del Toro.)

Lee had little interest in developing scripts or in being an on-set producer, so when he left Benderspink, in the fall of 2001, he joined with Doug Davison to create Vertigo Entertainment. Davison would do the follow-up work on a project after Lee had done the selling. In the beginning, Lee said, the hardest thing was making contacts abroad. "I didn't know a single person from Korea until 2001," he told me. All he knew was that when you met an Asian you should bow. He discovered, though, that his appearance gave him an advantage both at home and in Asia: everyone assumed that he was culturally attuned.

In fact, he was market attuned. He quickly sold Korea's No. 2 film, "My Wife Is a Gangster," to Miramax (Queen Latifah just signed on to star in the remake); its No. 3 film, "Marrying the Mafia," to Warner Bros.; its No. 4 film, "My Sassy Girl," to DreamWorks; and so on. His pitch was simple and effective: he would explain to Asian distributors that their films would probably never sell in America, because Americans hate movies with subtitles, and that they would make more money by selling the remake rights anyway. Then Lee would assure the rights holder that his agenda would never get muddled with theirs because he was going to represent them for free (with the American studio paying his fee if the film was made). Once Lee had secured the right to negotiate for an Asian company, he would tell the studios to regard the film as a script that someone had taken the trouble to film, and that happened to have been tested and proved as a hit in its home country.

Asian studios now send Lee subtitled cassettes before their films have even been released. As he got deeper into the backlist, he realized that he needed to bring in writers who could pitch the studios' heavily revised versions of the originals. Lee's favorite new idea is a high-school horror film that combines the best elements of several Japanese films. "There's a great title I like," he said. " 'Whispering Corridors.' And there's a great opening scene in another film where a girl gets e-mails on her PalmPilot from her friend who committed suicide, and an idea from another one about a haunted bathroom stall. I need a few more bits for it to all come together, so I keep mentioning it to writers and maybe something will happen." Budd Schulberg described this brand of Hollywood storytelling in "What Makes Sammy Run?," his 1941 novel about an aspiring producer named Sammy Glick. Glick would tell his notions "over and over to people who supplied a line here, an idea there, until the story began to take shape like a snowman forming hastily under many hands."



The frenzy for Asian movies was such that in October of 2001, when Lee persuaded Miramax to buy the remake rights to "My Wife Is a Gangster," a kung-fu comedy, the tape that the executives saw didn't even have subtitles. "Miramax bought it without even knowing what the characters were talking about," Lee said.

Dimension Films, a division of Miramax, also signed Vertigo to a "first look" deal, in which the studio pays the company's overhead and base salaries—for a young producer like Lee, roughly a hundred and fifty thousand dollars—and, in return, the company offers its projects to the studio first.

Vertigo's arrangement with Dimension quickly foundered. Lee believes that, once the company's executives discovered who his sources in Asia were, they told those sources that they'd get a better price if they dealt with the studio directly.

"The acquisitions people at Miramax and Dimension saw Roy as a threat," a former Dimension executive told me, "because they were pursuing that market unsuccessfully and here's this guy who comes in and sets things up really fast and says, 'You guys are idiots.' The top executives there hate Roy—he scares the hell out of them."

Last fall, Lee's lawyer began negotiating with Dimension to release Vertigo from its deal; Lee had a new first-look deal already lined up with another studio. When Dimension refused to dissolve the contract, Lee became furious. "I guess once 'The Ring' reached a certain level, Bob and Harvey Weinstein changed their minds," he said. "They've seen our slate of movies they shouldn't have passed on. Plus, they're so vindictive they might renew the option year, just to fuck us." (The studio did, in fact, renew Vertigo's contract through 2004.)

Realizing that his obligations to Dimension would be continuing, Lee dashed off a one-page treatment of "The Whale" (the comedy about the guy who gets comped in Vegas) for the studio. He wanted to cover himself, because he thought New Line might buy the concept for Ice Cube. (Contrary to what Lee had told Jason Filardi at L'Ermitage, New Line had not already done so.) Lee's hastily written treatment described the crucial third-act plot twist as "an ingenious plan that is too hilarious to mention here." He spent most of his time editing each paragraph to be exactly five lines long.

Dimension promptly optioned the treatment, paying Lee's assistant, its nominal author, about forty thousand dollars. "Nobody knows anything," Lee said with a shrug, quoting the screenwriter William Goldman's famous adage about Hollywood.

Lee has often held grudges against as many as four people at once, but he prefers to focus his rage on one enemy at a time. He can be a formidable antagonist; several of his former enemies became alarmed at the mention of his name. "I have made it hard for someone who's an enemy to get a job," Lee told me. "I'd have friends call the potential new boss and say, 'Call Roy for a reference.' And then I'd unload. Or I'll go to X-rated Web sites and type in my enemy's e-mail address, so they'll get spam from those sites forever. If I were rich enough, I'd pay someone forty grand a year to be on staff and just do dirty deeds. His car would block yours on your way to an important meeting, or he'd heckle you on the street. Not really a hit man, but an annoying man."

Recently, Lee suggested a bet with a producer in which the stakes were extremely high. "If you lose, you have to cut off part of your ear with a scissors and eat it," he told her. "You have to feel the pain." When Lee learned that someone told me he had used prescription diet pills to help him lose weight, he concluded—incorrectly—that the source was J. C. Spink. He sent me a long e-mail, c.c.-ing Spink, recounting the epiphany in which he purportedly realized that he needed to go on a diet:

> It was a day in the year 2000 when I dropped JC off in front of Urth Café where JC was meeting a prostitute. . . . I was thinking to myself that it was so pathetic that someone would have to resort to paying for sexual relationships. . . . I thought that maybe if I ever got as obese as JC, it would be impossible to give a good first-impression to any woman. . . . I urge you to ask him if he ever paid for a sexual act such as the aforementioned blow-jobs, hand-jobs or sexual intercourse.

"Look familiar?"

• •

Spink, a burly man who affably asserts that the woman in question was "one of the really hot strippers I used to hook up with," says that he viewed Lee's e-mail as "more humorous than anything," adding, "It seems like he's panicked, like he's lost his shit."

I asked Lee whether, at this point in his career, such vindictiveness was prudent. "I get pleasure from seeing someone suffer if they've mistreated me," he said, appearing to be puzzled by the question. "The way I do business seems to work out well, so I go with what makes me angry. I like the way I am, just a happy guy."

Shortly before 8 P.M. one Wednesday night, Lee walked into the basement of the Irving Thalberg Building on the Sony Pictures lot. He was accompanied by his friend Nathan Kahane, the head of production at Senator International, an American mini-studio owned by a German conglomerate. It was the night that Lee was screening "Ju-On" for Sam Raimi. Kahane, a short, chatty man with a broad smile, carried a bag of turkey-and-avocado sandwiches past the "No Food" signs.

"Did you see the article about 'Ju-On' on 'Ain't It Cool News?' " Lee asked. "It was a great article about the movie."

"About the trailer, I think," Kahane said.

"No, the movie. It was really, really positive."

Kahane grinned. "Don't try to sell me, Roy."

Inside Screening Room E, a handful of executives from Senator and from Raimi's company were lounging around. As Kahane distributed the sandwiches, Lee told him that he'd met with Taka Ichise, the film's producer, the day before, and that—he raised his voice and spoke to the room—Taka was looking for investors to make six great Japanese horror films. "We can get Hideo Nakata to do a film in Japan, with American actors, for one million dollars."

"That's a no-brainer," Joe Drake, Senator's president, said.

"Hideo Nakata?" Robert Tapert,

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I believe I would know you
I keep remembering you
sometimes long ago but then
other times I am sure you
were here a moment before
and the air is still alive
around where you were and I
think then I can recognize
you who are always the same
who pretend to be time but
you are not time and who speak
in the words but you are not
what they say you who are not
lost when I do not find you

—*W.S. Merwin*

Raimi's producing partner, said. "One million? Done. Done." A moment later, Tapert asked, "But why would the director of 'Ringu' and 'Dark Water' make a movie for us for a total of one million?"

"They haven't figured it out yet," Drake said. "He's a Japanese director and they haven't figured it out yet."

Sam Raimi came in quietly, carrying a leather satchel that was filled with scripts. A small, modest-looking man in spectacles, he shook everyone's hand and apologized for being late. His chin was covered with graying stubble and he looked tired. "Should we learn anything about this before we see it?" he asked.

"A haunted house infects the people who enter it with a virus that makes them die or kill people," Lee said promptly. "The first official American screening by the producer, Taka, is tomorrow, but you're seeing it first." (Lee had, in fact, sent an unsubtitled cassette of "Ju-On" to Dimension, expecting, and receiving, a pass.)

As the lights dimmed, Lee whispered to Kahane, "If it stinks, remember, I haven't seen it before."

"If it stinks, your reputation is ruined."

The film, written and directed by an unknown named Shimizu Takashi, was hypnotic. There were disturbing images of a woman crawling like a crocodile, of a ghost materializing on a security camera, its eyes swallowing the screen, and of a woman who, as she washes her hair in the shower, finds an extra finger interlaced with hers. "Ju-On" was also nearly impossible to follow, as there was no exposition and it kept jumping around in time. In the dark, Lee twisted in his seat, listening: was that sound someone snoring, or whimpering in fear?

Afterward, the men gathered in the hallway and tried to untangle the story. Sam Raimi came out last. "That was super-scary," he said, leaning against the wall. "Robert and I have a rule that we like to see fifteen great scares in a movie, and there were at least that many here, one after the other. Great sound design, great screencraft. Very spooky. I'm not completely sure what happened, though."

Lee jumped in. His hands thrust into the pockets of his brown Donna Karan pants, he said, "The video prequel is actually much scarier, and it explains why the guy at the end has a grudge against everyone. He's a father who finds out his wife had an affair—or so he thinks, because the house makes him crazy—and he goes on a killing spree. I've edited together the best scares from the video, and I could show that to you."

"Could we get this director to repeat these images and put in a linear narrative?" Raimi asked.

"Do it all in Japan," Tapert added, "using American actors who, for the story, are there for some reason. They're what—models?"

"Exchange students," Kahane suggested.

"Absolutely," Lee said. "The writer Stephen Susco is working with me on this, and he's got a terrific idea for a three-act story. He can pitch it to you next week."

Raimi seemed to focus on Lee for the first time. "Are you the agent?" he asked.

"I'm more of a producing partner," Lee said.

"Roy did the same thing on 'The Ring,' " Kahane said.

"So what are you asking for this?" Raimi asked.

"As I was telling Nathan," Lee replied, "because I know the producer, I think we could get it for a great price, very low."

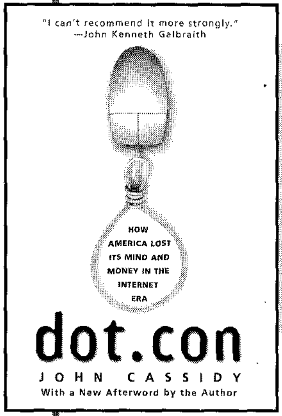
Raimi nodded, thinking. He snapped his satchel shut and said, "Let's do it."

Within a few weeks, Raimi and Senator had firmed up a deal to film the remake of "Ju-On" in Japan, in September, using American actors, on an anticipated budget of between ten and fifteen million dollars. Lee advised Taka Ichise to ask for whatever he liked and then settle for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, which is more or less what happened. Lee's fee was roughly the same as Taka's.

"Coming in, Sam didn't know who Roy was," Nathan Kahane said afterward, "but he will. Roy's at that moment, right now, where he's twelve months away from all the Sam Raimis knowing who he is, and calling him before he calls them."

Lee is at that point because he was able to view "Ringu" not just as a remake but as the future. Recognizing that Lee possesses a rare skill, neither J. C. Spink nor Mike Macari has entirely soured on his ex-friend. "Part of me would like to crush Roy," Spink said. "But I kind of like and respect him, too. Right now he's one of the hundred still standing of the original one thousand, and he might well be one of the twenty who rule in the end." After listing all the ways in which Lee had lied to and about him and had betrayed his trust, Macari concluded, without irony, "Roy is the remake king. I have the utmost respect for him."

For his part, Lee seems not to mind the loss of two of his closest companions. The compensations are evident, and he has learned, as he rises, not to look back. ♦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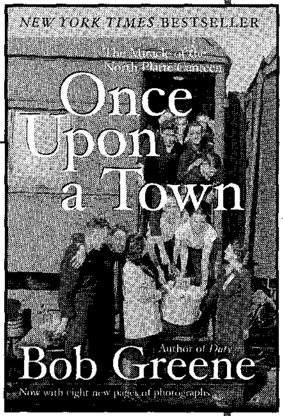
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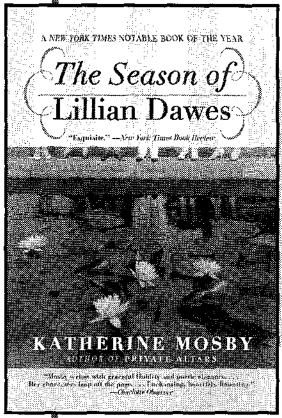
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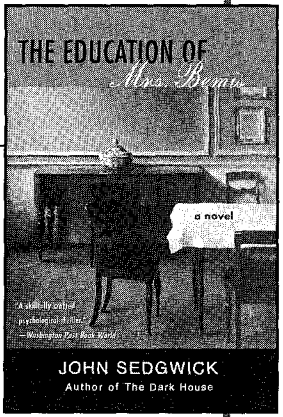
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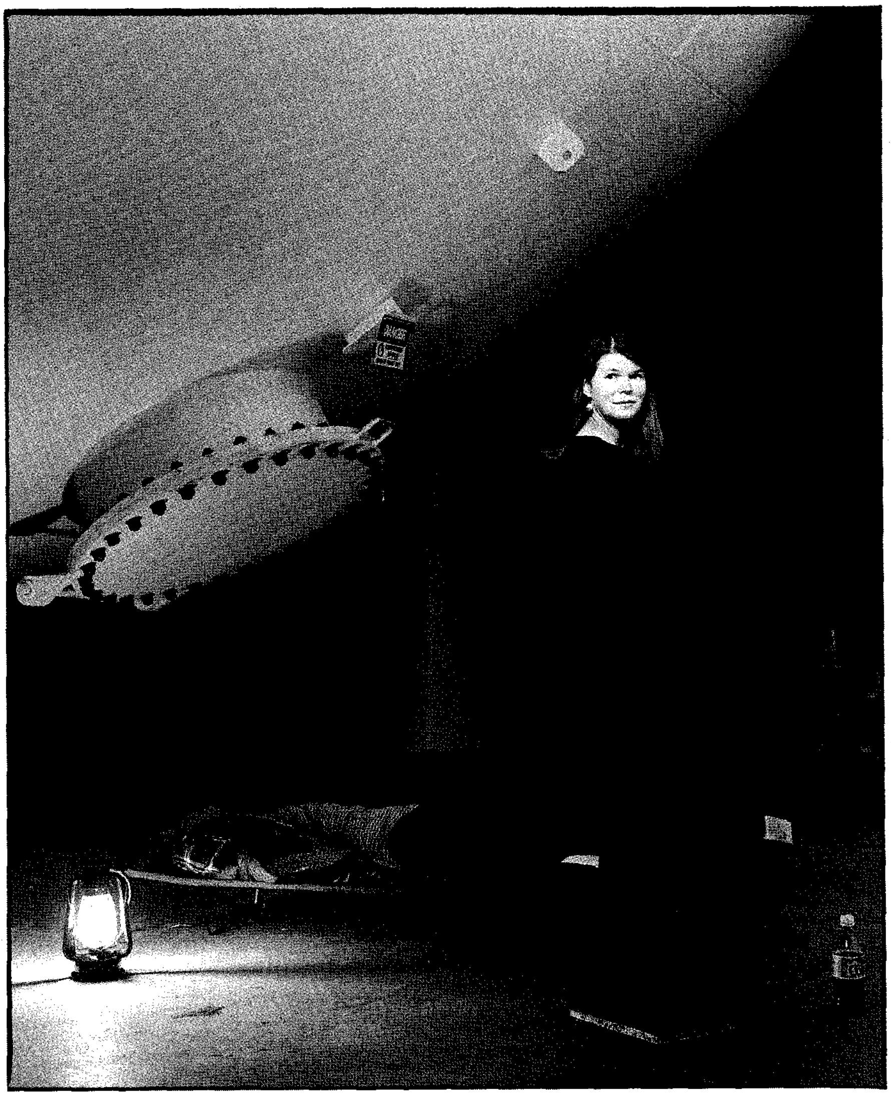
FUN WITH PHYSICS

The woman leading the hunt for nature's most elusive particles.

BY K. C. COLE



Janet Conrad next to her particle detector. Photograph by Martin Schoeller.

Janet Conrad fell in love with the universe at 3 A.M. on a cold autumn night in Wooster, Ohio. A teen-ager, she had no desire to get out of bed and face the frigid air in order to help her father, a dairy scientist, spray warm water on the prize dahlias they were growing together. But when she did go out to the garden she saw, for the first time in her life, how a shower of electrically charged particles flung from a star ninety-three million miles away can cover the sky in glowing pastel curtains. "I remember standing there and looking at the northern lights, and it was so neat that something so remote, so very far away, could be creating something so beautiful right in front of my eyes," she says. Twenty-five years later, Conrad, who is now thirty-nine and an associate professor of physics at Columbia University, created her own universe—a spherical particle detector, forty feet in diameter, that she built under an igloo of dirt at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab), near Chicago. The particle detector is lined with a constellation of twelve hundred eight-inch-wide "eyes," or phototubes, and is filled with eight hundred tons of baby oil, which is used to detect the shock waves generated by particle interactions. Early last fall, the detector began an unblinking vigil for subatomic stealth particles known as "sterile" neutrinos.

A lot can go wrong in large-scale physics experiments. Conrad has been basted in foul-smelling oil. She has been squirted with sticky insulating goo. She has had giant helium balloons get away because the soccer nets she was using to hold them down came loose. And she watched in dismay as the pristine white tank for her current experiment acquired a tough yellow scum (which her mother helpfully advised her to remove with Arm & Hammer baking soda). Nothing that Conrad has done in the past, however, approaches the challenge of her current experiment, which involves some fifty scientists from twelve institutions—including the experiment's co-leader, Bill Louis, of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Conrad's goal is to understand the character of neutrinos, mere wisps of matter that are more numerous, more elusive, and arguably more important than any other subatomic particle.

Neutrinos outnumber all ordinary particles by a billion to one—a thousand trillion of them occupy your body at every second, streaming down from the sky, up from the ground, and even from radioactive atoms inside you. But, for all their omnipresence, they might just as well be ghosts. As John Updike put it in his poem "Cosmic Gall":

> The earth is just a silly ball
> To them, through which they simply pass,
> Like dustmaids down a drafty hall.

Neutrinos can slip through a hundred light-years' worth of lead without stirring up so much as a breeze, and yet they power the most violent events in the universe, making stars shine and, in the process, creating every element, every dust mote, every raindrop, and, ultimately, every thought. They are the alchemists of the cosmos, the catalysts that make nuclear fusion possible, releasing the radiation that melts rock and makes the continents move. Because neutrinos can penetrate almost everything, they can take scientists to places they've never

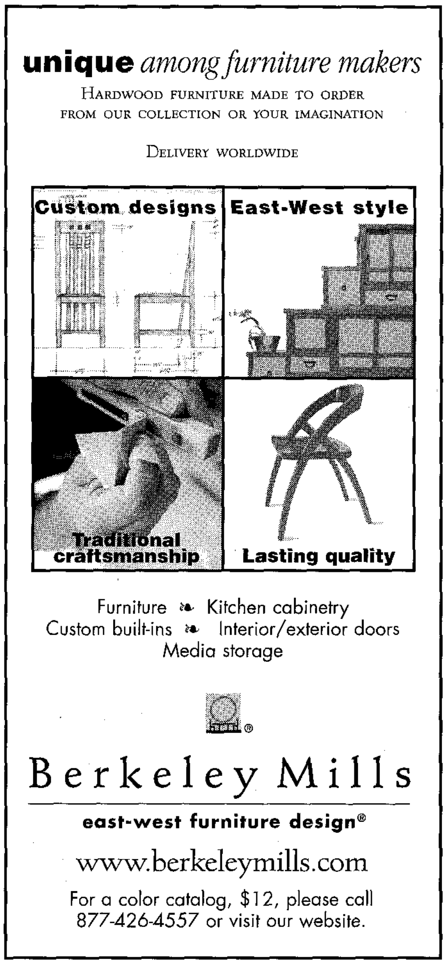
CORBIS SABA

been before—into the cores of exploding stars, for instance, or back to the big bang. As the universe evolved, neutrinos, because they interact so rarely with other particles, were, in effect, left behind, frozen in time. They are still there (or here, if you will) today, imprinted with information about the state of the universe at its birth. Most important, neutrinos break the basic rules that govern other particles, thereby suggesting that the rules themselves are wrong. If Conrad's experiment confirms her suspicions, she will show that a particle that was barely believed to exist can carry enough weight to determine the drape of galaxies.

When I met up with Conrad at a gathering of the group of Columbia professors who work on high-energy physics, she was the only woman there. Some of her fellow-physicists seemed not to know what to make of her. In contrast to earlier generations of women physicists, she has managed to remain unabashedly girlish. She uses words like "neat" and "cool," and her talks are often embellished with whimsical drawings and analogies to hair dye, shopping, or flowers. "She gets away with it because she knows her stuff so well—nobody can attack her," Bonnie Fleming, a Fermilab physicist, says. Rocky Kolb, a cosmologist at Fermilab, explains, "She obtains what she wants in a different way than most physicists. She can tell you you're wrong without telling you you're stupid. That's unusual. This is not a field for the faint of heart—it's like herding cats. You have a hundred physicists and deep down inside they all think they're smarter than you are. Everyone else herds with a cattle prod. Janet does it with charm." Conrad's charisma has carried her to the top of a field that has traditionally had few places for women, and has won her acclaim and honors such as the prestigious Presidential Early Career Award and the New York City Mayor's Award for Excellence in Science and Technology. (During the presentation of the latter, she had to teach then Mayor Giuliani how to pronounce "quantumchromodynamics.")

Next to her colleagues in khaki and oxford blue, Conrad, with shiny auburn hair, a short cranberry-colored skirt, and matching heels, offered a study in contrasts. She laughs a lot, and her speech comes in staccato bursts, with few transitions. "Conversations seem to jump around, but, if you probe, there's a logical connection," her mentor, the Columbia physicist Michael Shaevitz, says. "She has this wealth of information stored away in different areas, and she pulls it in like an octopus with tentacles." Conrad also gets angry easily. "I have a tendency to fight bitterly," she admits. "I'm so hotheaded that half the time I get myself into trouble." But, she adds, "A little bit of hotheadedness doesn't hurt you in this field." Conrad applied for tenure at Columbia at the first possible moment (and got it, at the age of thirty-six), because she simply couldn't stand the suspense of waiting. A lot of her energy seems to be fuelled by Diet Coke; empty cans line up wherever she goes, like bread crumbs marking her trail. (She drinks so much of it that her mother bought her stock in the company.) It is this combination of charm and restlessness—as well as her ability to design clever and elegant experiments—that has made Conrad successful enough to persuade Columbia to put up a million dollars to get her experiment going while she waited for grant money to arrive. It was an enormous sum for any young physicist to receive, let alone a woman.

Neutrinos have been eluding physicists ever since Wolfgang Pauli first hypothesized their existence, in 1930. In the physical universe, what goes in always equals what comes out, in one form or another. But physicists had noticed that when radioactive atoms spat out electrons and transformed into other kinds of atoms, some of the original energy appeared to be missing. Pauli proposed that it had been carried away by a virtually invisible particle. The thought was so preposterous, however, that even he seemed disinclined to take it seriously. "I have hit upon a desperate remedy," he wrote to his colleagues. "But I don't feel secure enough to publish anything about this idea." He went on to express his embarrassment at his own heresy: "I have done a terrible thing. I have postulated a particle that cannot be detected." In 1931, the physicist Enrico Fermi baptized the hypothetical particle "neutrino," or "little neutral one," but his paper was rejected by the journal *Nature* as too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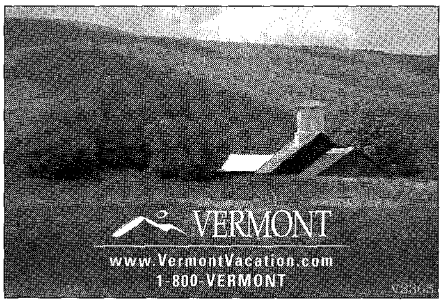
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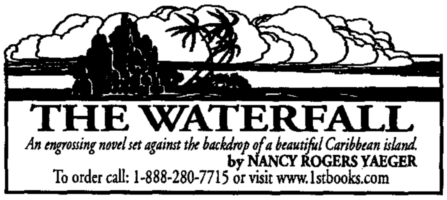
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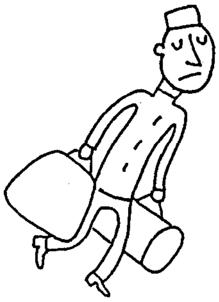
“speculative” and “remote from reality.”

The first experiment actually to hunt for neutrinos was called, appropriately enough, Project Poltergeist. In 1956, the Los Alamos-based physicists Clyde Cowan and Fred Reines found a definite trace of neutrinos in the intense wash of radiation spewed forth from newly commissioned nuclear reactors. They wrote to Pauli, who reportedly shared a case of champagne with friends. But detecting neutrinos from a reactor was one thing, and detecting them in nature was another. The first neutrinos from the sun weren't discovered until twelve years later, in the Homestake gold mine, in South Dakota, where they created reactions in a tank filled with chlorinated cleaning fluid. To everyone's surprise, however, the Homestake experiment, led by Raymond Davis, Jr., also discovered that about two-thirds of the neutrinos that had been expected to arrive from the sun as a product of nuclear fusion were missing. A 1992 experiment designed to detect atmospheric neutrinos found a similar portion absent. Physicists came up with various theories to account for these disappearances, but in the past few years they have settled on one: neutrinos aren't really “missing”; they are simply altering themselves en route. “You start out with a race of house cats, and you find you have lions in the end,” Conrad explains; the physicists set their traps for kittens, and lions ignore the bait.

Of course, it is misleading to think of fundamental particles as clearly defined entities like cats. They are more like waves. You can imagine a particle, for example, as the sound wave you make by plucking a guitar string. A neutrino, however, is not a single defined wave. It is a mixture of waves—messy yet fundamental, like a signature. Neutrinos are known to exist in three different forms, each associated with a member of the electron family—the electron neutrino, the muon neutrino, and the tau neutrino. Yet any neutrino can be part electron, part muon, and part tau neutrino, and it can change as its waves fall in and out of step with each other. The discovery that neutrinos oscillate between forms has huge consequences. The particles were originally thought to be weightless, but in order for the waves to fall in and out of synch they must have some mass. (Guitar strings with different masses produce different sounds because they vibrate at different frequencies; if neutrinos had no mass, there could be no oscillation.) Given their numbers, this means that neutrinos—even if their mass is minute—must weigh as much as all the stars in the sky.

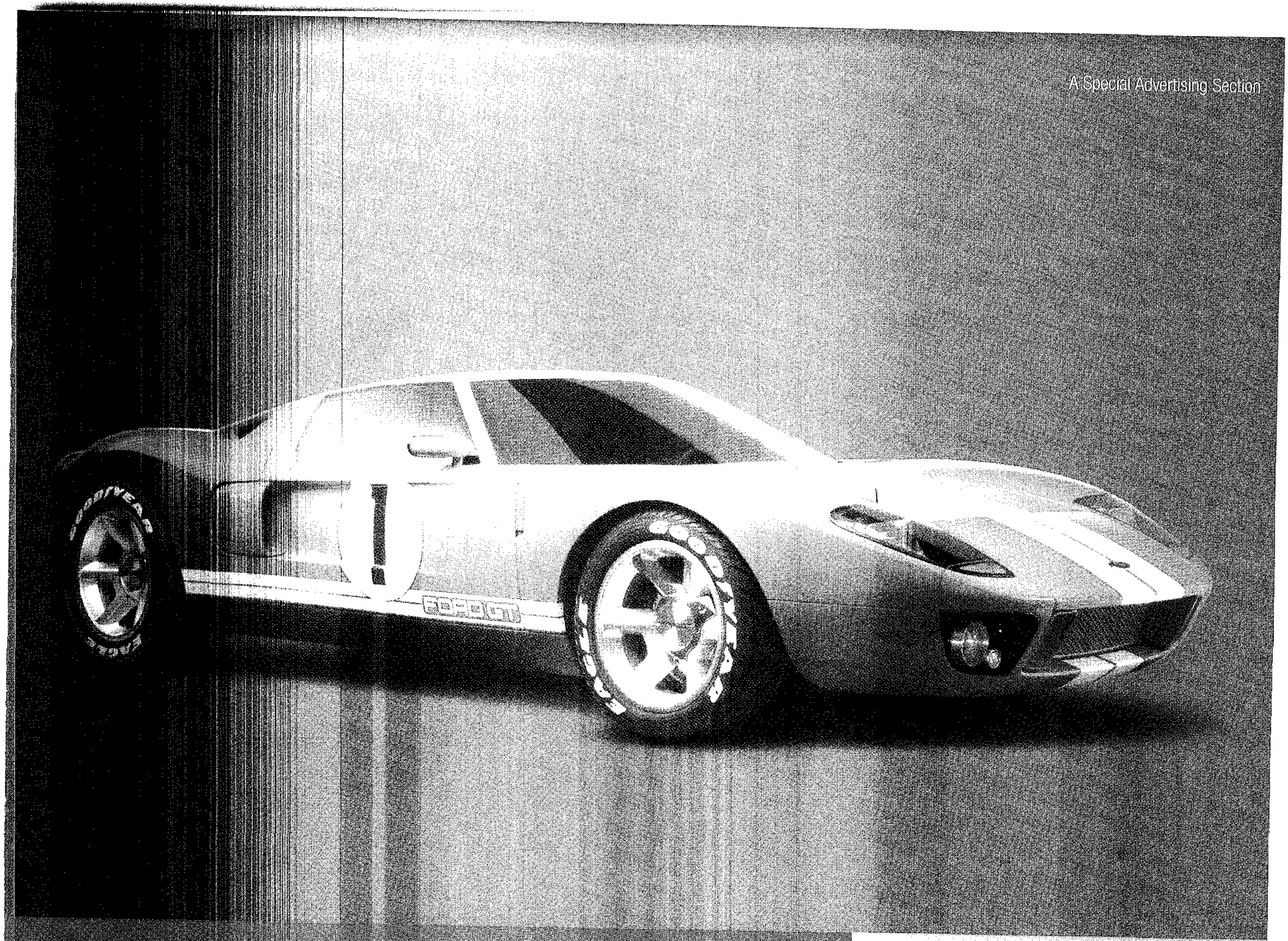


Although physicists can easily tell how many neutrinos go “missing,” they can't always tell what forms they have changed into. Most are transforming between the familiar electron, muon, and tau forms. But a highly controversial experiment, conducted at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in 1995, uncovered a fourth possibility: that a portion of the neutrinos were changing into a completely unknown species, not electron, muon, or tau, and perhaps substantially more massive than any of those—a species that was undetectable by any means except its gravitational pull. This hypothetical form is known as the sterile neutrino.

Most physicists were skeptical of the results, in large part because the numbers seemed out of line with those from previous experiments. And, when Conrad and Michael Shaevitz decided to design an experiment to prove or disprove the Los Alamos results, their colleagues were dumbfounded. They couldn't believe, according to Shaevitz, that such “well-respected physicists” would even bother. Conrad's friends asked her why she wanted to “waste her life.” In 1998, however, combining her skills as an experimenter and a salesperson, Conrad presented her proposal to the advisory council at Fermilab. In contrast to the many larger experiments performed at the lab, hers was designed to give clear results quickly, relatively inexpensively, and with mostly recycled equipment. Even the project's name was chosen to stress its streamlined approach: Mini Booster Neutrino Experiment (or MiniBooNE). “The name was just weird enough that everyone remembered it,” Conrad says—which is no small matter when it comes to securing funding. It was the only time that anyone remembers applause at such a meeting. “We usually sit there and scowl,” Andreas Kronfeld, a Fermilab physicist, says. “Then this sparkling young person gives a really good talk. It was a little sunshine in all that gray.”

Fermilab was founded in 1967 by Robert Rathbun Wilson, a Berkeley-trained physicist who had worked on the Manhattan Project and then, after the bombing of Nagasaki, refused to take part in weapons research. Wilson was also a sculptor, and he planted his works everywhere on the sixty-eight-hundred-acre grounds. There is a Möbius strip in a pool on the roof of the auditorium, a staircase modelled on a double strand of DNA. Even the utility poles are shaped like the symbol for pi. Thousands of physicists come here now, mostly to conduct experiments with the world's highest-energy accelerator, a circular racetrack for particles called the Tevatron. Around its four-mile circumference, superconducting magnets steer protons travelling at almost the speed of light into head-on collisions, setting off fireworks of particles as the energy of speed congeals into matter. In effect, each collision creates a miniature big bang—creation all over again, thousands of times per second. Shopping-mall-size detectors (think of them as elaborate electronic eyes) are needed to keep track of just a tiny part of this activity.

The Tevatron ring is bordered, on the outside, by a river of cooling water, like a moat. Inside, Wilson and his successors have reverentially re-created twelve hundred acres of Illinois prairie. If Fermilab was to be the frontier of physics, Wilson reasoned, then it should have its roots in the literal frontier. The grasses grow up to ten feet tall, and much of the original wildlife has returned, including deer, foxes, salamanders, turtles, beavers, weasels, mink, and hundreds of species of birds. As a final touch, Wilson added a herd of buffalo. There is another poignancy at Fermilab these days, a palpable sense that billion-dollar particle accelerators and physics labs—the “cathedrals of contemporary science,” as Wilson called them—have fallen from favor since the post-Second World War period, when physics produced not only the H-bomb but also such leaders in the disarmament effort as Einstein and Wilson himself. In many ways, this makes the results of small experiments such as Mini-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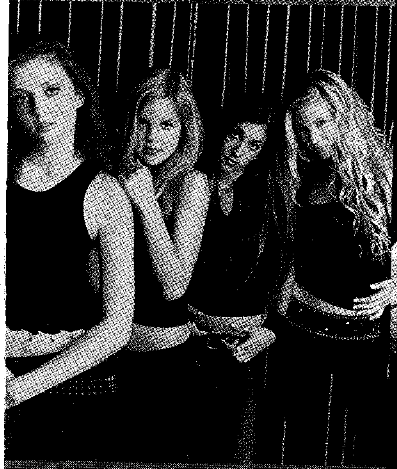

Opposite page, top to bottom: Beyoncé Knowles, Solange Knowles. This page, clockwise from top left: Destiny's Child, Kelly Rowland, Michelle Williams, Play, and Ramiyah.

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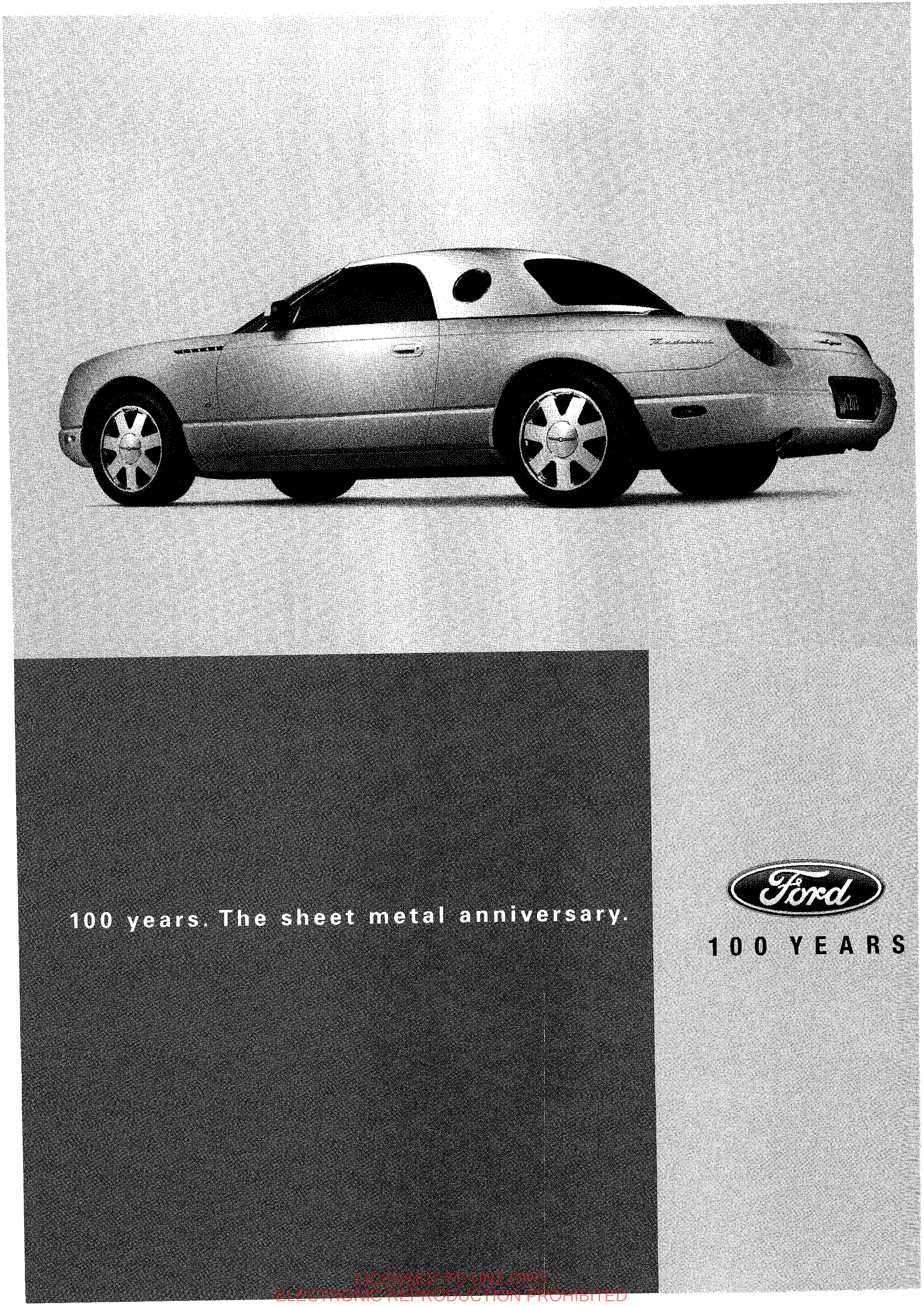
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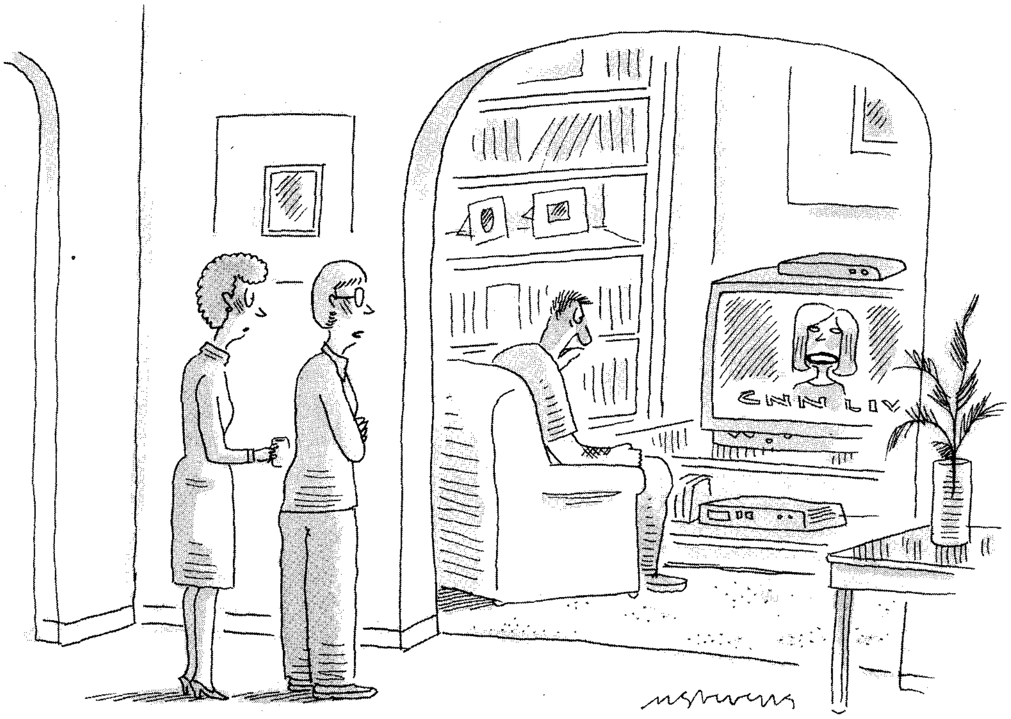
BooNE even more pivotal.



"This is our rant room."

I attended a MiniBooNE meeting at Fermilab a few months before the experiment was due to be launched. The meeting took place in a glass-walled high-rise building that Wilson modelled on Beauvais Cathedral, in France. It was a difficult time for the project. The head contractor had been killed in a car accident the day before the meeting, and a building designed to house part of the experiment was still unfinished. A shipment of baby oil from Exxon had turned out to be unusable, and the company was struggling to replace it. "A million things that I never thought could happen have happened on this experiment," Conrad said. "You'd never dream that your contractor could die." Many of the researchers had gathered to bring one another up to date on the experiment's progress: the people who would generate the beam of muon neutrinos, which Conrad and her collaborators hoped to observe oscillating into "sterile" forms; the people building the detector; the people in charge of the oil and of the computer programs to keep track of it all; and the people working on the physics itself—the properties of neutrinos, and possible astrophysics applications. There was conversation about dump-chunks, QTsmear, spillsplitters, and Roefitters. Someone passed around a heavy ring, a custom-made flange. It was an odd pairing of mathematics and metal, of the ephemeral and the concrete. "That's one of the neat things about being an experimentalist," Conrad says. "You can actually see what you've accomplished."

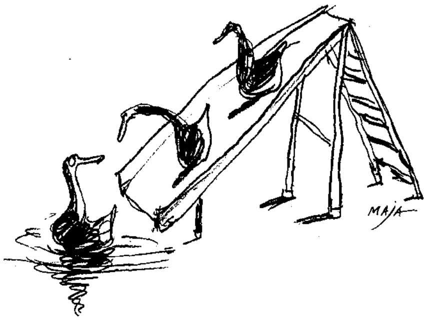
Childhood in a small Ohio town was, it turns out, a surprisingly good preparation for a career in particle physics. Conrad learned many of her practical skills in the local 4-H Club. "Electronics really isn't that different from cooking or sewing," she says. "There's a certain set of rules that you follow, a certain set of patterns. You may want to try variations on the theme, but, once you know your patterns, it's pretty easy." Conrad believes that she was probably born to be a scientist. "I loved having conversations with my parents about how the world works," she says. "They never treated me as someone who couldn't understand." Her uncle, Walter Lipscomb, a Nobel laureate in chemistry, challenged her whenever he came to visit, throwing out puzzles at the dinner table. "I was a miniature adult as far as he was concerned, and he was happy to let me in on his world," Conrad says. After her sophomore year at Swarthmore, her uncle offered her his apartment in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for the summer, and suggested some people she might approach for jobs at Harvard. One of them was the late physicist Frank Pipkin, who was using the Harvard cyclotron to test parts of an experiment to be installed at Fermilab. Conrad worked with Pipkin that summer. The following summer, she went with him to Fermilab. As soon as she saw the detectors, she says, "I knew I wanted to play with them. It was big and dirty and it was just so me."

Dirt, it seems, is an important ingredient in particle-physics experiments. The otherwise flat topology of Fermilab is interrupted by big mounds of earth, long ridges that look as if some large, determined animal were burrowing beneath. The earth acts as an insulator, protecting the experiments below from stray cosmic rays, and the people above from radiation produced by the particle beams. The tank of baby oil that is the heart of MiniBooNE sits under a dirt hill that Conrad describes as "remarkably like a home for Teletubbies." Bill Louis, Conrad's partner, drove me to the site. We bounced over unpaved tracks until we came to something that looked like a large yurt with prairie grasses sprouting from the top of it. A small antechamber inside was stacked with metal cabinets full of computers. Louis opened a square entry hatch and extended a rickety metal ladder, and we crawled down backward into the huge white tank, which was about to be sealed for good.

Building such an experiment can involve some difficult choices. The quarry you're chasing can't be seen directly, so you have to induce it to leave visible traces. The world's most famous neutrino experiment, Super-Kamiokande (or Super-K), in Japan, uses fifty thousand tons of purified water—watched over by twelve thousand phototubes—to catch the wakes produced by the traceable particles in neutrino interactions. Workers ride inside the vast cavern in a little rubber boat. MiniBooNE uses oil, which leaves slightly better wakes but precludes the possibility of boat travel. ("If I fell out, I would sink to the bottom and die," Conrad says, laughing.) The wake is actually a shock wave made by an electrically charged particle travelling through the oil—something like a sonic boom—and the phototubes pick it up as a ring of light. A fuzzy ring signals that the incoming neutrino was an electron neutrino; a sharp one signals a muon neutrino. But it's not always that simple. Other kinds of reactions may be impossible to identify. "Until you've tried to work with a particle as elusive as a neutrino, you have no idea how hard this can actually be," Conrad says. There are so many decisions to be made: Do you watch for neutrinos to disappear or for puzzling appearances? And where, exactly, do you look? Say you start off with lions and they change into cats after two miles, then back into lions two miles later; if you placed your detector at the four-mile mark, you'd see only lions and could easily conclude that nothing had happened. "So often you pose a question, and you build a detector to look at it," Conrad says. "Then the detector answers some other question."

Conrad took me to a hangarlike area, where a critical part of the experiment was being tested. It was an enormous aluminum "horn" designed to focus pions, unstable particles that naturally disintegrate into neutrinos as they travel through a hundred and fifty feet of sewer pipe buried underground. A purified beam of neutrinos would then continue on, through ordinary ground, toward the detector full of oil. To anyone who has spent time in a physics lab, this seems peculiar: other sorts of particle beams are steered through pristine vacuum pipes to insure that they aren't bumped off their course by unintended collisions with air. Neutrinos, however, don't "see" air, any more than they see lead; everything is a vacuum to them. Conrad expects neutrinos from the beam to collide with molecules in the oil several times a minute. But, for every controlled neutrino encounter, a hundred thousand will be caused by cosmic rays from the atmosphere. To avoid these false signals, most neutrino experiments are performed at the bottom of deep mines. MiniBooNE, instead, will receive its beam of neutrinos in bursts, five every second. By comparing the timing of the bursts and of the signals, Conrad and her collaborators hope to sort the needles from the hay. Three hundred extra phototubes line an outer wall of the MiniBooNE sphere, forming a "veto region" designed specifically to flag stray signals—a muon entering from the outside, say, rather than being created by a neutrino in the oil.

In Conrad's tenth-floor office at Fermilab, a field of fake gerbera daisies swayed on tall metal rods like orange and red lollipops. The bottom shelf of a bookcase held a small bottle of Tide detergent and a black light (to demonstrate how scintillators glow), tuning forks (for explaining oscillating neutrinos), and little vials of oil. Conrad never passes up an opportunity to discuss what she's doing. On planes, she draws other passengers into conversations, inviting them to visit Fermilab. She recently completed a radio series, "Earth and Sky," which aired on National Public Radio. And she works with high-school teachers, and even students, whom she hires to help her on experiments. When she won the Maria Goeppert-Mayer Award—for outstanding achievement by a young woman physicist—in 2001, she began to turn her attention more directly to the problem of bringing women into her field. She acknowledges that women tend to have a different style of doing physics from men; they use more words relative to equations, for instance, and this can count against them on exams. "You can watch the guys look at this and say, 'Too many words. Must not know what she's talking about,'" Conrad says. But, in response to those who question whether the specialized equipment is intimidating to women, she insists that it's a lot less complicated than what you find in an average well-stocked kitchen. Conrad's presence has already made a big difference in the Columbia physics department. When she first started teaching there, eight years ago, a site report by the American Physical Society concluded starkly, "Columbia is not a friendly place for women students and perhaps for students in general." By 2000, half of the undergraduates in the high-energy-physics program were female, a shift that many people attribute to Conrad's aggressive attempts to draw young women into the department.



When colleagues at Columbia talk about what she has accomplished, they often tell the story about the benches. In the fall of 1996, she noticed that students were sitting on the dirty floor in the hallway, waiting for her class to start. When she asked for benches to be installed, the administration balked at the expense. Over the Thanksgiving break, she was visiting a former student's family and mentioned the problem. The next day, the student's father, a Columbia alumnus, mailed her a check for a thousand dollars, which she used to buy five plain benches. Other people in the department liked the look of them, and started to add their own touches to the hallway—posters and plants. Then, as Conrad tells it, "the university people came back and said, 'Wow, this looks really nice, but these benches are not the topnotch benches we would like to have here.' So they went and bought nice benches and gave me back mine." "It's one of those things that really made a difference," Steve Kahn, then the chair of the physics department, says.

After our day at Fermilab, Conrad took me to her house in nearby Geneva, Illinois. She has two other homes as well—an apartment in Manhattan and a house in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where her husband, Vassili Papavassiliou, teaches physics at New Mexico State University. Conrad and Papavassiliou met while they were wiring two tiers of the same experiment (one is reminded of Lady and the Tramp sharing that fateful strand of spaghetti), but, like many academic couples, they couldn't find work in the same city. They make do, often meeting at Chicago's O'Hare airport for dinner. "It's really bad when the waitress at the airport starts to know you," Conrad said.

A suitcase full of dirty laundry had waited by the door of Conrad's Geneva house for several days, but the night before she had prepared two Greek pies for our dinner, brushing thirty separate layers of phyllo dough with butter—after a full day's work and a friend's fortieth-birthday party. "That's why people don't like to be around me much," she said. "I wear them out." The previous weekend, she had planted three hundred tulip and daffodil bulbs. Spread out on the coffee table were photographs of her father's dahlias, which she was examining in order to choose roots for next year. She called them "bursts of light," and they did seem to explode, like red and pink and orange fireworks against the black backgrounds. "I look at these beautifully symmetric flowers, and yet I find that the one little flaw in them is the thing that makes the flower interesting," she said. "And that's true in high-energy physics, too. It's the little flaws that make it fascinating. And some of the little flaws are not so little."

Of course, it's hard to know whether a flaw is just a flaw, or whether it's a crack in the edifice of physics, a first glimpse into something entirely unexpected. Because data are always ambiguous, it can be years before physicists feel confident enough to publish potentially controversial results. On September 1, 2002, neutrinos began to trickle into the baby oil at MiniBooNE. By the middle of this month, the detector's phototubes had already picked up a hundred thousand interactions. Conrad says that she won't know for at least two years whether the disparaged Los Alamos results were right after all. But it should be worth the wait. If MiniBooNE eventually proves the existence of the sterile neutrino, it will require physicists to rethink everything, from the details of the big bang to the formation of the elements. It could even help explain why there is matter in the universe at all. On the other hand, it will be just as important if MiniBooNE proves that there is no sterile neutrino. "Not finding the ether was a successful experiment," Rocky Kolb says, referring to an experiment that proved there was no medium for carrying light—a finding that helped to cement Einstein's theory of relativity. "A lot of people have too much ego to work on confirming experiments," he adds. "Janet is one of the world's leaders in neutrino physics, and, whatever the future of particle physics is, she'll play a major role."

As MiniBooNE began to take in data, a second experiment gearing up at Fermilab was preparing to send a beam of neutrinos four hundred and fifty miles to a deep mine in Minnesota. Another experiment aims to send neutrinos from Geneva, Switzerland, through the Alps to a lab under a mountain near Rome. An endeavor aptly named ICECUBE will turn a cubic kilometre of ice at the South Pole into a detector to observe neutrinos from the stars and cores of galaxies. Conrad, meanwhile, has taken a lead role in pushing for a National Underground Science Laboratory in the Homestake mine, where neutrinos from the sun were first observed to be missing. (Raymond Davis, who led the first Homestake discovery, won the 2002 Nobel Prize in Physics.) And last year Conrad completed her work on a select panel of physicists charged with deciding what kind of major particle accelerator should follow Fermilab's designated successor, now under construction in Europe. As usual, Conrad was one of the youngest people on the panel, and there were some difficult moments. Some people blamed her for orchestrating a protest against a few of the panel's recommendations, even though she claims she had nothing to do with it. "I believe I make things clot," she says. "You add me to a mixture, and all of a sudden big chunks of stuff will fall to the bottom."

Two days after I left Fermilab, one of the twelve thousand phototubes in Super-K, the Japanese detector, collapsed while it was being refilled with water after routine maintenance. The shock wave from the collapse created a storm inside the tank. Seven thousand phototubes were shattered. "This is a real disaster," Conrad told me over lunch in Madison, Wisconsin. She'd driven up from Fermilab with Len Bugel, a physics teacher at Stratton Mountain School, in Vermont, with whom she'd worked for many years, and in the car she had persuaded Bugel to try to figure out how to duplicate the effect on a small scale—to see whether MiniBooNE's tubes would collapse under the same conditions. "Creative resource-getting is the No. 1 thing you have to learn," Conrad said. And, by the way, she asked, was I interested in spending the summer at Fermilab, helping out on her experiment? "We'll teach you what you need to know," she said. ♦

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GERTRUDE STEIN'S WAR

The years in Occupied France.

BY JANET MALCOLM

When I read "The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book" for the first time, Eisenhower was in the White House and Liz Taylor had taken Eddie Fisher away from Debbie Reynolds. The book, published in 1954, was given to me by a fellow-member of a group of pretentious young persons I ran around with, who had nothing but amused contempt for middlebrow American culture, and whose revolt against the conformity of the time largely took the form of patronizing a furniture store called Design Research and of writing mannered letters to each other modelled on the mannered letters of certain famous literary homosexuals, not then known as such. "The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book" fit right in with our program of callow preciousness; we loved its waspishly magisterial tone, its hauteur and malice. "The French never add Tabasco, ketchup or Worcestershire sauce, nor do they eat any of the innumerable kinds of pickles, nor do they accompany a meat course with radishes, olives or salted nuts," Toklas wrote, as if preparing a manifesto for us. Her *de haut en bas* footnote pointing out that "a marinade is a bath of wine, herbs, oil, vegetables, vinegars and so on, in which fish or meat destined for particular dishes repose for specified periods and acquire virtue" filled us with ecstasy.

The "Cook Book" itself sits in a kind of bath of reminiscence about Toklas's life with Gertrude Stein, from which its own literary virtue derives. More than a cookbook and memoir, it could almost be called a work of literary modernism, a sort of pendant to Stein's tour de force "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," published in 1933. The similarity of tone of the two books only deepens the mystery of who influenced whom. Was Stein imitating Toklas when she wrote in Toklas's voice in the "Autobiography," or did she invent the voice, and did Toklas then imitate Stein's invention when she wrote the "Cook Book"? It is impossible to say.

As I leaf through my copy of the "Cook Book," the evidence of ancient food stains leads me to the recipes I actually cooked, and there are not many of them. Most of Toklas's recipes were and remain too elaborate or too strange to attempt. (I did make—loving its perversity—her Gigot de la Clinique, which involved taking a large hypodermic needle and injecting a leg of lamb with orange juice twice daily for a week as it sat in the obligatory marinade of wine and herbs.) Underlinings and marginal comments also highlight the passages—such as those quoted above—whose tart snottiness gave me special delight in the fifties. But there is one chapter whose pages bear no gravy stains or underlinings and whose bare cleanness makes it look almost unread. It is entitled "Food in the Bugey During the Occupation," and in it Toklas writes of the years of the Nazi Occupation, which she and Stein spent in an area of provincial eastern France called the Bugey—first in a handsome old house near the town of Belley, and then in another old house in nearby Culoz. When I had occasion to read this chapter a few months ago, I was struck by its evasiveness no less than by its painfully forced gaiety. How had the pair of elderly Jewish lesbians escaped the Nazis? Why had they stayed in

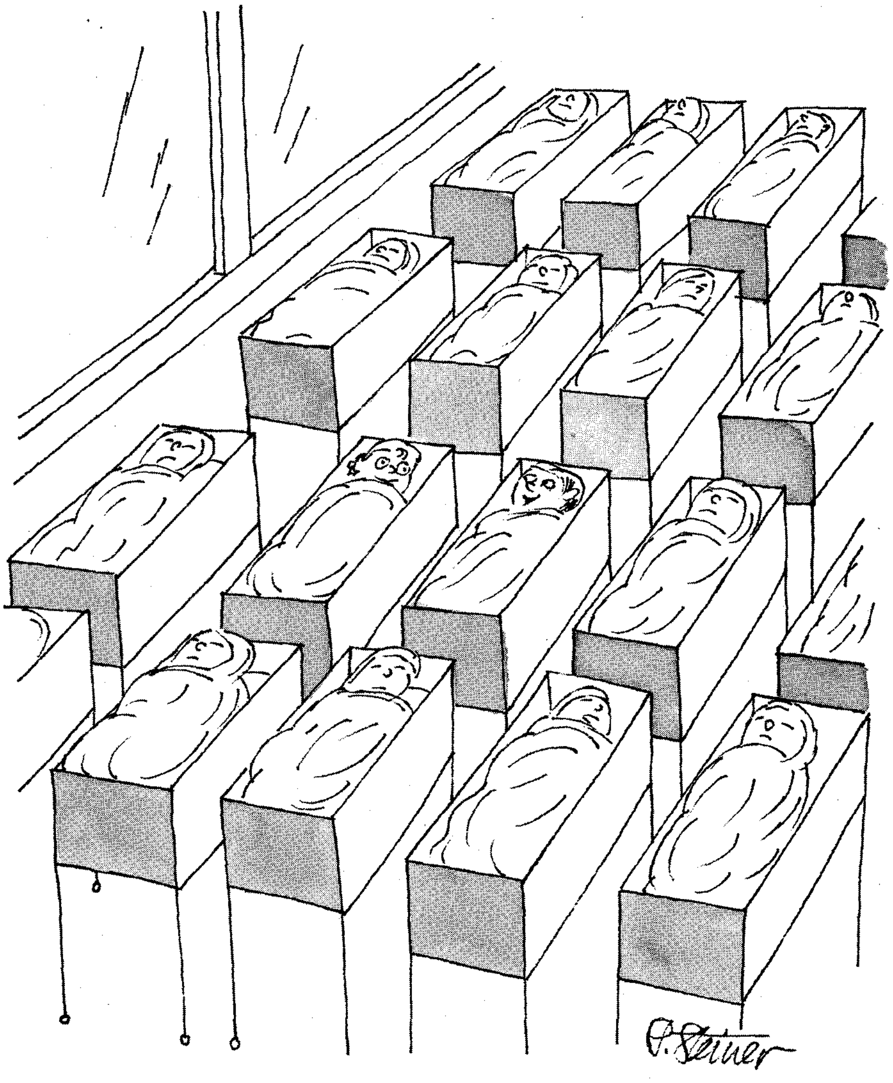
Stein at home in Paris in 1946, photographed by Cecil Beaton. Above: Stein with her dogs, Basket and Pépé.

France instead of returning to the safety of the United States? Why did Toklas omit any mention of her and Stein's Jewishness (never mind lesbianism)? Well, in the fifties one did not go out of one's way to mention one's Jewishness. Gentlemanly anti-Semitism was still a fact of American life. The fate of Europe's Jews was known, but the period of public mourning had not begun. The term "Holocaust" had yet to be in common use. In 1954, Toklas's evasions went as unremarked as her recipes for "A Restricted Veal Loaf" and "Swimming Crawfish" went uncooked. Today, the evasions seem egregious, though hardly incomprehensible. What we now know about Stein and Toklas's war makes it easy to see why the complex actuality of their situation and conduct found no place in "The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book." "As if a cook-book had anything to do with writing," Toklas says of her enterprise at the book's end. Or with dealing with complexity, she might have added.

In August, 1924, while driving to the French Riviera to visit Picasso, Stein and Toklas veered over to the Bugey and spent a night in Belley at a hotel called the Pernollet, which had been recommended to them for its good food. The food turned out to be mediocre, but they liked the hotel and the countryside so well that they stayed on—wiring Picasso that they would be delayed a week, and in the end never making it to the Riviera at all. They returned to the Pernollet summer after summer (eating elsewhere) and presently began looking for a place of their own in the region. They were prepared to buy, build, or rent, but could find nothing that suited. Then one day, across a valley, they saw "the house of our dreams," as Gertrude Stein writes in the "Autobiography." She continues:

> Go and ask the farmer there whose house that is, Gertrude Stein said to me. I said, nonsense it is an important house and it is occupied. Go and ask him, she said. Very reluctantly I did. He said, well yes, perhaps it is for rent, it belongs to a little girl, all her people are dead and I think there is a lieutenant of the regiment stationed in Belley living there now, but I understand they were to leave. You might go and see the agent of the property. We did. He was a kindly old farmer who always told us allez doucement, go slowly. We did. We had the promise of the house, which we never saw any nearer than across the valley, as soon as the lieutenant should leave. Finally three years ago the lieutenant went to Morocco and we took the house still only having seen it from across the valley and we have liked it always more.

Stein wrote "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" in the fall of 1932, in a kind of paroxysm of desire for the fame and money that had so far eluded her. Since her youth, she had wanted "*gloire*," as her friend Mabel Weeks reported, but her experimental writings had not brought it. Finally, at the age of fifty-eight, she decided to (so to speak) prostitute herself and write a book in regular English that would be a best-seller. That it actually became one may be a measure of the genius Stein claims for herself throughout the book. What kind of genius she was is hard to pin down. She had trained to become a medical doctor, specializing in psychology, and only after dropping out of the Johns Hopkins medical school in her last year, in 1901, did she begin to think of writing as her conduit to glory. Her apprentice work was conventional and unpromising, rather stilted. After she settled in Paris, in 1903, however, as if her muse were roused by the Old World's more bracing air, she began to produce the writings for which she is known—stories, novels, plays, and poems that are like no stories, novels, plays, or poems ever written but seem to be saturated with some sort of elixir of originality. In the trio of stories "Three Lives," written in 1905, and the novel "The Making of Americans," begun in 1903 and completed in 1911, Stein is still writing in regular, if singular English, but by 1912 she had started producing work in a language of her own, one that uses English words but in no other way resembles English as it is known. "Not to be wrapped and then to forget undertaking, the credit and then



"Same old same old. How about you?"

the resting of that interval, the pressing of the sounding when there is no trinket is not altering, there can be pleasing classing clothing," she writes in "Portrait of Mabel Dodge at the Villa Curonia" (1912), an early foray into this language. (The ostensible subject of the portrait—a rich American adventuress, who had entertained Stein and Toklas at her Italian villa—was so taken with the piece that she had it privately printed and bound in Florentine wallpaper, and handed it out to visitors at her Fifth Avenue apartment.) Two years later, in "Tender Buttons," inspired by Cubist still-lifes, Stein raises the stakes:

> A BOX
> Out of kindness comes redness and out of rudeness comes rapid same question, out of an eye comes research, out of selection comes painful cattle. So then the order is that a white way of being round is something suggesting a pin and is it disappointing, it is not, it is so rudimentary to be analysed and see a fine substance strangely, it is so earnest to have a green point not to red but to point again.
>
> APPLE
> Apple plum, carpet steak, seed clam, colored wine, calm seen, cold cream, best shake, potato, potato and no no gold work with pet, a green seen is called bake and change sweet is bready, a little piece a little piece please.
>
> A little piece please. Cane again to the presupposed and ready eucalyptus tree, count out sherry and ripe plates and little corners of a kind of ham. This is use.

In a piece entitled "An Acquaintance with Description," written in 1926, the wordplay achieves a graphic dimension:

> Let it be when it is mine to be sure let it be when it is mine when it is mine let it be to be sure when it is mine to be sure let it be let it be let it be to be sure let it be to be sure when it is mine to be sure let it to be sure when it is mine let it be to be sure let it be to be sure to be sure let it be to be sure let it be to be sure to be sure let it be to be sure let it be to be sure let it be to be sure let it be mine to be sure let it be to be sure to be mine to be sure to be mine to be sure to be mine let it be to be mine let it be to be sure to be mine to be sure let it be to be mine let it be to be sure let it be to be sure to be sure let it to be sure mine to be sure let it be mine to let it be to be sure to let it be mine when to be sure when to be sure to let it to be sure to be mine.

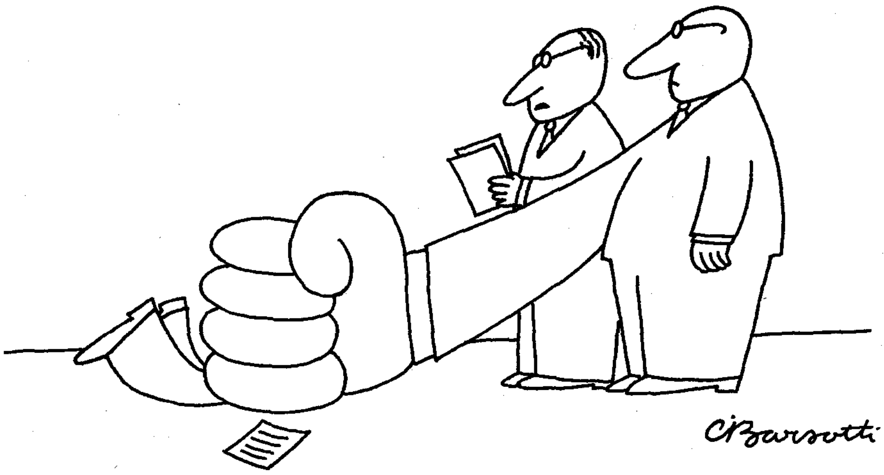
The unflagging inventiveness of Stein's language experiments, and the consistent authority of her tone, brought her ever greater renown in the world of the avant-garde. But this wasn't enough for her—she wanted to conquer the large outer world as well.

With "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," she not only achieved the vulgar celebrity she craved but brilliantly solved the koan of autobiography, by disclaiming responsibility for the one being written. Speaking in the voice of her companion, Gertrude Stein can entirely dispense with the fiction of humility that the conventional autobiographer must at every moment struggle to maintain. "I may say that only three times in my life have I met a genius," Stein has Toklas say of their first meeting, "and each time a bell within me rang and I was not mistaken, and I may say in each case it was before there was any general recognition of the quality of genius in them. The three geniuses of whom I wish to speak are Gertrude Stein, Pablo Picasso and Alfred Whitehead."

Stein's playful egomania pervades the book ("She realises that in english literature in her time she is the only one"), as does an optimism that gives the story of her life the character of a fairy tale. Nothing bad ever happens to her; every difficulty is overcome as if by magic. While a student at Radcliffe in the late eighteen-nineties, Stein, faced with an examination in William James's philosophy course for which she has not studied, writes on the examination paper, "Dear Professor James, I am so sorry but really I do not feel a bit like an examination paper in philosophy to-day," and leaves the examination room. The next day, she receives a postcard from James—"Dear Miss Stein, I understand perfectly how you feel I often feel like that myself"—and he gives her the highest grade in the course. Her whole life is like that. Picasso is going to paint her portrait, but after eighty or ninety sittings he says, "I can't see you any longer when I look," irritably paints out the face, and goes to Spain for a vacation. On his return, he paints in the face from memory and presents Stein with the famous masklike portrait. Or here is how Stein and Toklas came to work as volunteers during the First World War, driving supplies to regional French hospitals (work for which they were decorated by the French government): "One day we were walking down the rue des Pyramides and there was a ford car being backed up the street by an american girl and on the car it said, American Fund for French Wounded. . . . We went over and talked to the american girl and then interviewed Mrs. Lathrop, the head of the organisation. She was enthusiastic, she was always enthusiastic and she said, get a car. But where, we asked. From America, she said. But how, we said. Ask somebody, she said, and Gertrude Stein did, she asked her cousin and in a few months the ford car came."

The story of the acquisition of "the house of our dreams" is the culminating example of life's evident inability ever to say no to Gertrude Stein. But the story doesn't end there. Four years after the publication of "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," Stein published another autobiography, called "Everybody's Autobiography." The intention was both to repeat the success of the best-seller and to atone for it. Naturally, only the second was fulfilled. What Stein felt she had to atone for was the crisp linear narrative of "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," which she had adopted merely in order to woo the conventional reading public, and which was not her style at all. The idea this time was not to shape life into a narrative of gay and triumphant wish fulfillment but to present it in all its elusive ambiguity. In "Everybody's Autobiography," Stein again tells the story of the acquisition of the dream house, but now it is a confession of bad behavior. The house did not just fall into the hands of Stein and Toklas. They went to ruthless lengths to wrest it from the lieutenant—lengths that seem more connected to savage twenty-first-century New York real-estate practice than to civilized twentieth-century literary history. Stein begins the story with characteristic indirectness:

> The present tenant was a lieutenant in the army and as he was stationed at the garrison in Belley, they have a battalion of Moroccan troops there, it is always strange to see in a mountain French village these native troops. It is queer the use of that word, native always means people who belong somewhere else, because they had once belonged somewhere. That shows that the white race does not really think they belong anywhere because they think of everybody else as native. Anyway the lieutenant who was in the house that we had seen across the valley and that we had had to have was stationed in the garrison at Belley. . . . Why said everybody do you not get him made captain, then he would have to leave as there is no room for another captain there in the garrison. We thought that an excellent idea. . . .
>
> Well we know a man he is a nice man his name is George. . . . When he was doing his military service he was clerk in the war office. He used to tell how every one even a general



"That was Swanson, sir. He wasn't on the list, but I'll add him."

> would come in and ask him if he could not get something done a little quicker for him. . . .
>
> George went off and after some months of waiting in which you look anxious but ask no questions and he mysteriously said wait he came and said I have bad news for you, they say at the war office that he is not much good as a lieutenant, he is a war lieutenant, and cannot pass further examinations but as a captain he would not do at all and then besides when he retired he would have to be paid a pension as a captain and now in two or three years he retires and they only have to pay his pension as a lieutenant, but said George perhaps he could go to Morocco that would be good for him he would get more money for active service and he would leave the house free. . . . A month after the proprietor wrote and said the lieutenant was going to Morocco and was ready to sublet the house to us.

In "The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book," Toklas retells the story, changing some of the details, and promoting the lieutenant to captain, but essentially corroborating Stein's version. What actually happened remains unclear. Stein and Toklas's unrepentant confession of pushing the lieutenant (or captain) out of the house has the ring of truth but is full of holes. It raises more questions than it answers. The expatriate writer and editor Elliot Paul, in his book "Understanding the French" (1954), offers an illuminating, if rather extreme, example of what happens to historical accounts that don't add up: they get rewritten so that they do. Paul audaciously takes Stein and Toklas's meshuggeneh story and changes it into a plausible narrative:

> It was four miles from Belley where Gertrude Stein had her country residence, a house she wanted so badly before she could buy it that she went to the Secretary of War himself, in order to pave the way for the deal. The house was occupied by a major [yet another promotion] who had been overlooked two or three times, for one reason or another, when promotions were in order. The Major would not sell his house for any price unless he was made a lieutenant-colonel and transferred to Northern Africa. Now Gertrude, with Alice Toklas, had performed such heroic ambulance-driving duty in World War I that she had been cited and decorated by the same Secretary of War, who was still in office when she coveted the Major's little house. Gertrude, always a woman of direct action in the higher echelons, went straight to the Secretary and asked him to arrange the Major's promotion, which he did.

Stein, of course, never went to the Secretary of War, nor did she buy the house—it was not for sale but for lease. Paul's assertion about the major's refusal to sell unless he was promoted and sent to Africa is fantasy. But Paul was right to stress how badly the women wanted the place. The house (by no means little) was a seventeenth-century stone manor, situated in the hamlet of Bilignin, a few miles from Belley. It had outbuildings, vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and a terrace garden that looked out over the valley toward the distant mountains. Inside were spacious rooms with old wallpapers and antique furniture. The couple came there every spring and stayed until the fall—later and later into the fall as time went on. The place was "better than our dreams of it," Toklas writes in the "Cook Book." Friends would visit and take photographs, and these, even in black-and-white, capture the extraordinary beauty of the place and testify to the contentment of its inhabitants.

When war came to Europe in the fall of 1939, Stein and Toklas were at Bilignin and remained there for the winter. Stein "wheedled a military pass from the authorities," Toklas writes in the "Cook Book," so that they could drive to Paris to get winter clothes and passports from their apartment, and to try to protect Stein's paintings against bombing by laying them out on the floor. That attempt was abandoned—the "wall space was four times larger than the floor space"—nor could they find the passports, which had been put away too well. Writing of their search, Toklas lets drop a chilling detail. In the hunt for the passports, the pedigree of their poodle Basket turned up. "I put it in my bag," she writes. "Later the authorities gave a ration to pedigreed dogs and Basket was not too badly nourished during the years of restriction." So the Nazi racial theories extended even to pets.

Between 1939 and 1940, Stein and Toklas constantly wavered on the question of whether to stay in France or go back to America. In an article published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1940, called "The Winner Loses: A Picture of Occupied France," Stein records the tenseness of the time. When Italy came into the war, in June, 1940, "I was scared, completely scared, and my stomach felt very weak, because—well, here we were right in everybody's path. . . . I was frightened; I woke up completely upset. And I said to Alice Toklas, 'Let's go away' . . . and we telephoned to the American consul in Lyon and he said, 'I'll fix up your passports. Do not hesitate—leave.' " But the next day, on the way back from seeing the consul in Lyons, who again told them in no uncertain terms to leave, "I said to Alice Toklas, 'Well, I don't know—it would be awfully uncomfortable and I am fussy about my food. Let's not leave.' " After further vacillations and another trip to Lyons, the decision to stay was made.

It came about this way: Returning from Lyons, as they approached Belley, Stein and Toklas met a local doctor named Chaboux and his wife, and put their dilemma to him.

> "Well," said Doctor Chaboux, reflecting, "I can't guarantee you anything, but my advice is stay. I had friends," he said, "who in the last war stayed in their homes all through the German occupation, and they saved their homes and those who left lost theirs. No," he said "I think unless your house is actually destroyed by a bombardment, I always think

> the best thing to do is to stay." He went on, "Everybody knows you here; everybody likes you; we all would help you in every way. Why risk yourself among strangers?"
>
> "Thank you," we said, "that is all we need. We stay."

In her book "Wars I Have Seen" (written between the winter of 1942-43 and the summer of 1944, and published in 1945), Stein records another scary moment of decision, one that took place in February, 1943. She and Toklas were about to move house from Bilignin to a manor in Culoz, a few miles away, and had gone to Belley to say goodbye to a lawyer who had represented them in an unsuccessful lawsuit against the owner of the Bilignin house, who had reclaimed it for her own use. (When friends found them the house in Culoz, they abandoned a second lawsuit.) "My lawyer said that everything was nicely arranged and we thanked each other and said what a pleasure it had all been," Stein writes, and then gets to her point:

> And now I have something rather serious to tell you [the lawyer said]. I was in Vichy yesterday, and I saw Maurice Sivain, Sivain had been sous-prefet at Belley and had been most kind and helpful in extending our privileges and our occupation of our house, and Maurice Sivain said to me, tell these ladies that they must leave at once for Switzerland, to-morrow if possible otherwise they will be put into a concentration camp. But I said we are just moving. I know he said. I felt very funny, quite completely funny. But how can we go, as the frontier is closed, I said. That he said could be arranged, I think that could be arranged. You mean pass by fraud I said, Yes he said, it could be arranged. I felt very funny.

Stein goes home and says to Toklas:

> We are not moving to-morrow we are going to Switzerland . . . and Alice Toklas and I sat down to supper. We both felt funny and then I said. No, I am not going we are not going, it is better to go regularly wherever we are sent than to go irregularly where nobody can help us if we are in trouble, no I said, they are always trying to get us to leave France but here we are and here we stay. What do you think, I said, and we thought and I said we will walk down to Belley and see the lawyer and tell him no. . . . The lawyer said perhaps we had better go and then he said he had a house way up in the mountains and there nobody would know, and I said well perhaps later but now I said to-morrow we are going to move to Culoz, with our large comfortable new house with two good servants and a nice big park with trees, and we all went home, and we did move the next day.

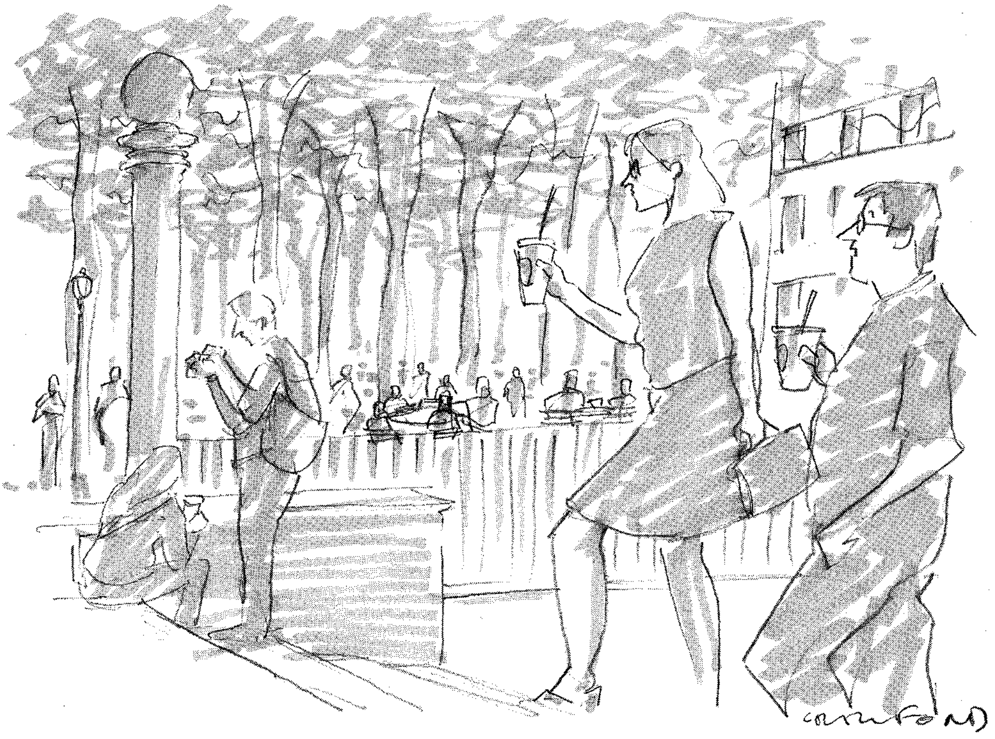
Stein's refusal to budge in the face of such a warning is at once incredible and completely in character. Early in "Wars I Have Seen"—in fact, on its first page—Stein presents herself to the reader in such a way as to make her behavior comprehensible and consistent with the deep structures of her personality. She tells us that she was the youngest of five children, the baby of the family, "and as such naturally I had privileges the privilege of petting the privilege of being the youngest one. If that does happen it is not lost all the rest of one's life, there you are you are privileged, nobody can do anything but take care of you, that is the way I was and this is the way I still am, and any one who is like that necessarily liked it. I did and do."

Nobody can do anything but take care of you. Throughout her life, Stein was taken care of by people who evidently felt helpless to do otherwise. The chief of these worker bees was Alice Toklas, who managed the practical details of Stein's life almost to the point of parody. In "Everybody's Autobiography"—a large part of which is taken up with Stein's lecture tour in America after the triumph of "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas"—Stein herself pokes fun at her dependence on Toklas:

> I liked the photographers, there is one who came in and said he was sent to do a layout of me. A layout, I said yes he said what is that I said oh he said it is four or five pictures of you doing anything. All right I said what do you want me to do. Why he said there is your airplane bag suppose you unpack it, oh I said Miss Toklas always does that oh no I could not do that, well he said there is the telephone suppose you telephone well I said yes but I never do Miss Toklas always does that, well he said what can you do, well I said I can put my hat on and take my hat off and I can put my coat on and I can take it off and I like water I can drink a glass of water all right he said do that so I did that and he photographed while I did that.

In the "Cook Book," Toklas takes the joke a step further when she exclaims of an inconvenient gift of pigeons, "Six white pigeons to be smothered, to be plucked, to be cleaned and all this to be accomplished before Gertrude Stein returned for she didn't like to see work being done." But the work Toklas did for Stein was no joke. It was unending and evidently ungrudging.

"I had cajoling ways, one has when one continues to be the youngest," Stein writes of herself as a child in "Wars I Have Seen," and these ways never left



"I see a couple of chairs over there by the naked guy working on his laptop."

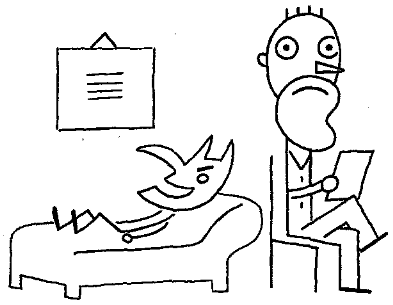
her. Her charm was as conspicuous as her fatness, and surely accounts for the way people were always practically lining up to be of service to her—not only Alice Toklas and friends such as Carl Van Vechten and Mabel Dodge and Thornton Wilder but perfect strangers. Writing, in the "Autobiography," of the period in the First World War when she was driving the Ford car from the obliging cousin, Stein has Toklas report that "she never did anything for herself, neither changing a tyre, cranking the car or repairing it," because someone else always turned up. Stein/Toklas continues:

> This faculty of Gertrude Stein of having everybody do anything for her puzzled the other drivers of the organization. Mrs. Lathrop who used to drive her own car said that nobody did these things for her. It was not only soldiers, a chauffeur would get off the seat of a private car in the place Vendôme and crank Gertrude Stein's old ford for her. Gertrude Stein said that the others looked so efficient, of course nobody would think of doing anything for them. Now as for herself she was not efficient, she was good humored, she was democratic, one person was as good as another, and she knew what she wanted done. If you are like that she says, anybody will do anything for you. The important thing, she insists, is that you must have deep down as the deepest thing in you a sense of equality. Then anybody will do anything for you.

This is pretty irresistible. But one should not make the mistake of assigning to Stein's rhetoric of equality and one person being as good as another its usual left-wing label. Stein was a conservative with an increasingly reactionary bent—she loved the Republican Party, she hated Roosevelt, and she actually supported Franco. "She was a rentier, and possessed a rentier mentality in matters of taxes, jobs, and governments," a young American friend, W. G. Rogers, wrote of Stein in a memoir entitled "When This You See Remember Me: Gertrude Stein in Person" (1948). He went on:

> Without her fixed income we might never have heard of the rue de Fleurus, but with it we should not be surprised to find her disapproving of Roosevelt and the New Deal, believing in rugged individualism, favoring a gold basis for the dollar, regarding a man out of work as lazy or incompetent, thinking every American always could take care of himself.

The equality Stein was talking about was her youngest-child's confidence that everyone was susceptible to her charm. She could chat up anyone. But she surely did not believe that one person was as good as another. The issue of superiority—of who was a genius, as she put it, and who wasn't—was of abiding interest to her. Stein's snobbery began in childhood. She was contemptuous of two of her four siblings—her brother Simon (second-born) and her sister Bertha (third-born)—viewing the former as simpleminded and pathetic and the latter as boring and annoying. ("It is natural not to care about a sister certainly not when she is four years older, and grinds her teeth at night.") She respected the oldest brother, Michael, who took over the family business when the father, Daniel Stein, died, in 1891 (he was part owner of several San Francisco street railroads), and who made the fixed income possible; and she adored the fourth-born, Leo, who was two years her senior and brilliantly intelligent. "My brother and I were always together," Stein recalls in "Everybody's Autobiography," and she goes on to observe, "It is better if you are the youngest girl in a family to have a brother two years older because that makes everything a pleasure to you, you go everywhere and do everything while he does it all for and with you which is a pleasant way to have everything happen to you." When Leo went to Harvard, Gertrude followed him to Radcliffe; while she was at medical school at Johns Hopkins, he took up a scientific-research project in Baltimore; and when he moved to Paris, in 1903, she joined him in his quarters at 27 Rue de Fleurus, where she began to pursue her writing career in earnest and, under Leo's tutelage, to see the point of modernist art and to become a fellow early collector of it. But then Leo, too, was found wanting: "Slowly and in a way it was not astonishing but slowly I was knowing that I was a genius," and "There was no reason for it but I was, and he was not there was a reason for it but he was not and that was the beginning of the ending and we always had been together and now we were never at all together. Little by little we never met again."



Leo Stein's history is the all too common one of early promise coupled with the incapacity to fulfill it. He started and abandoned many careers—art historian, scientist, painter, and philosopher. He couldn't finish anything. Some kind of hypercriticality kept him from doing so. The writer Hutchins Hapgood, in

BERRY BUSH

The winter they abandoned Long Point Village—
A dozen two-room houses of pine frames clad
With cedar faded to silver and, not much whiter
Or larger, the one-room church—they hauled it all
Down to the docks on sledges, and at high tide
Boats towed the houses as hulks across the harbor
And set them on the streets of Provincetown.
Today they're identified by blue tile plaques.
Forgotten the fruitless village, in broken wholes
Transported by a mad Yankee frugality
Sweating resolve that pickled the sea-black timbers.

The loathsome part of American Zen for me
Is in the Parable of the Raft: a traveller
Hacks it from driftwood tugged from the very current
That wedged it into the mud, and lashes it
With bitter roots he strips between his teeth.
And after the raft has carried him across

The torrent in his path, the teacher says,
The traveller doesn't lift the raft on his back
And lug it with him on his journey: oh no,
He leaves it there behind him, doesn't he?
There must be something spoiled in the translation,

Surely those old original warriors
And ruling-class officials and Shinto saints
Knew a forgetting heavier than that:
The timbers plunged in oblivion, hardened by salt;
Black, obdurate throne-shaped clump of ancient cane-spikes
At the raspberry thicket's heart; the immigrant
Vow not to carry humiliations of the old
Country to the new, still infusing the segmented
Sweet berry, illegible ingested seed, scribble
Of red allegiances raked along your wrist;
Under all, the dead thorns sharper than the green.

—*Robert Pinsky*

his autobiography, "A Victorian in the Modern World" (1939), gives this telling description of Leo:

> He was almost always mentally irritated. The slightest flaw, real or imaginary, in his companion's statements, caused in him intellectual indignation of the most intense kind. And there seemed to be something in him which took it for granted that anything said by anybody except himself needed immediate denial or at least substantial modification.

Leo was dismissive of Gertrude's writing—he believed she wrote the way she did because she couldn't write proper English—and he said something that Gertrude couldn't forgive. "He said it was not it it was I. If I was not there to be there with what I did then what I did would not be what it was," she writes in "Everybody's Autobiography." "It did not trouble me," she adds. But in fact Leo's observation troubled her all her life and continues to trouble her posterity. "Perhaps after all they are right the Americans in being more interested in you than in the work you have done although they would not be interested in you if you had not done the work you had done," she writes elsewhere in the book. If this can be said of any celebrity artist, one must also say of Stein that if she had not been as interested in herself as she was she would not have written what she wrote. She wrote almost exclusively, if not always openly, about her own experiences, and of all writers she may be the one whose work most cries out for the assistance of biography in its interpretation. The "it" and the "I" are never far apart.

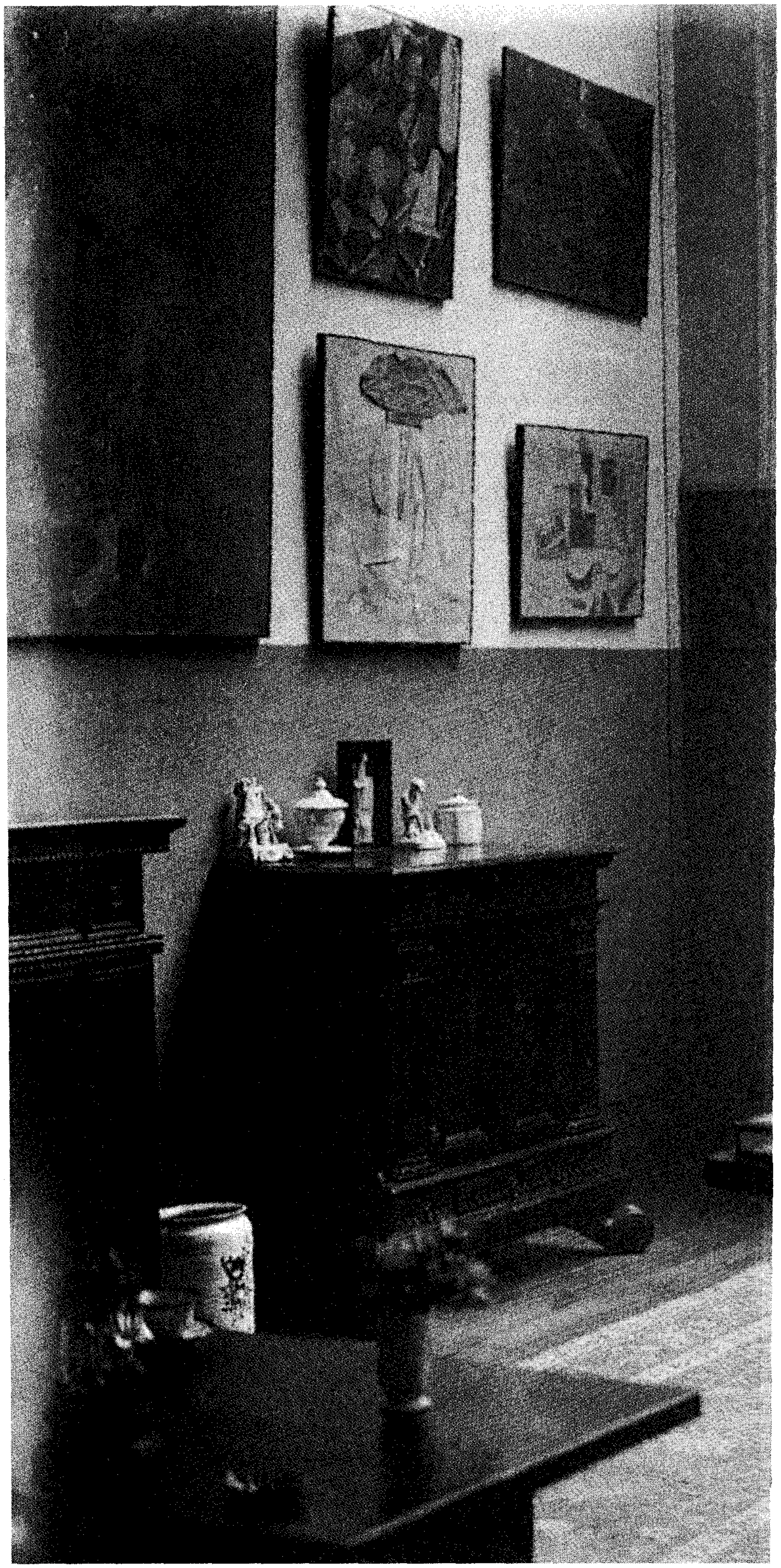
Her "Melanctha" story, in "Three Lives," for example, which for many years was celebrated as some sort of wonderfully advanced study of black life by a white writer (and, by today's less ridiculous standard of what is advanced, can only be called patronizing and uncomprehending), is based not on Stein's experience of black life in America but on a lesbian romance between herself and a woman named May Bookstaver, which began at Johns Hopkins and broke her heart. "Melanctha" is Stein's second stab at coming to terms with her heartbreak in a piece of writing. The fake-black talk between Melanctha and her lover Jeff is a new version of the talk between the white women lovers in "QED," a novella that Stein daringly wrote about herself and Bookstaver in 1903 but didn't dare publish in her lifetime. Similarly, the characters in "The Making of Americans" derive from members of her own family, though this time openly; indeed, Stein often spoke of the members of her real and fictional families as if they were one. And even the most hermetic of her writings are works of submerged autobiography. The key of "I" will not unlock the door to their meaning—you need a crowbar for that—but will sometimes admit you to a kind of anteroom of suggestion.

In 1914, Leo moved out of the Rue de Fleurus and went to live in Florence. Some years earlier, his job of making everything a pleasure for his sister had been taken over by Alice Toklas (she moved in with Gertrude and Leo in 1909), and his departure had something of the air of a shoe dropping. He and Gertrude divided the paintings and the furniture and parted forever. Gertrude's bruised feelings over Leo's stubborn refusal to acknowledge her genius were nothing compared with Leo's mortification and fury over his sister's success. As letters published after his death reveal, Leo was almost beside himself when "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" came out and was acclaimed. He kept quizzing friends about their reaction, hoping to have them confirm his view of Gertrude as a fraud and of her admirers as "fatuous idiots who go to hear her silly twaddle." "I suppose you have read her autobiography," he wrote to the collector Albert Barnes in 1934. "The book seems to me a rather clever superstructure on a basis of impenetrable stupidity. Gertrude and I are just the contrary. She's basically stupid and I'm basically intelligent. But Gertrude's sort of massive self-admiration, and, in part, self-assurance, enabled her to build something rather effective on her foundations. I, on the other hand, through the upsetting, complicating and stultifying effects of a terrific neurosis, could build nothing substantial on my intelligence, which came through only in fragments and distorted bits."

It is generally agreed that, without Alice Toklas, Stein might not have had the will to go on writing what for many years almost no one had any interest in reading. Stein's self-admiration and self-assurance needed to be fed, and Toklas appeared just in time to give them the nourishment that Leo had withheld. "You write a book," Stein plaintively says in "The Making of Americans," "and while you write it you are ashamed for everyone must think you are a silly or a crazy one and yet you write it and you are ashamed, you know you will be laughed at or pitied by every one and you have a queer feeling and you are not very certain and you go on writing. Then some one says yes to it . . . and then never again can you have completely such a feeling of being afraid and ashamed." Toklas said yes to Stein's writing when her self-confidence was at its lowest ebb. She banished doubt from Stein's artist's consciousness, as she later banished the unworthy from Stein's salon. The division of household labor between the two women, with one doing everything and the other nothing, was another precondition for the flowering of Stein's genius. "It takes a lot of time to be a genius, you have to sit around so much doing nothing, really doing nothing," Stein cheerfully reports in "Everybody's Autobiography." Her literary enterprise was itself almost entirely work-free. Mabel Dodge's four-volume autobiography, "Intimate Memories," begun in 1924 (after her fourth marriage, when she became Mabel Dodge Luhan), gives us a rare glimpse of Stein at her desk during the long visit she and Toklas made to the Villa Curonia in 1912. It was late at night, and Stein was "writing automatically in a long weak handwriting—four or five lines to the page—letting it ooze up from deep down inside her, down onto the paper with the least possible physical effort; she would cover a few pages so and leave them there and go to bed, and in the morning Alice would gather them up." Stein never, or hardly ever, revised (a rare false start to "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" exists among Stein's papers), and in "Everybody's Autobiography"she said that she never wrote much more than half an hour a day (but added significantly, "To be sure all day and every day you are waiting around to write that half hour a day"). Stein didn't even type her work; she just oozed into her notebooks and Toklas did the rest.

The two women came from similar backgrounds—second-generation Jewish American business families, and both lost their mothers to cancer, Stein at the age of fourteen and Toklas at twenty—but could not have been more different in appearance and temperament. In "Intimate Memories," the wickedly observant Mabel Dodge draws a vivid contrast between them:

> Gertrude Stein was prodigious. Pounds and pounds and pounds piled up on her skeleton—not the billowing kind, but massive heavy fat. She wore some covering of



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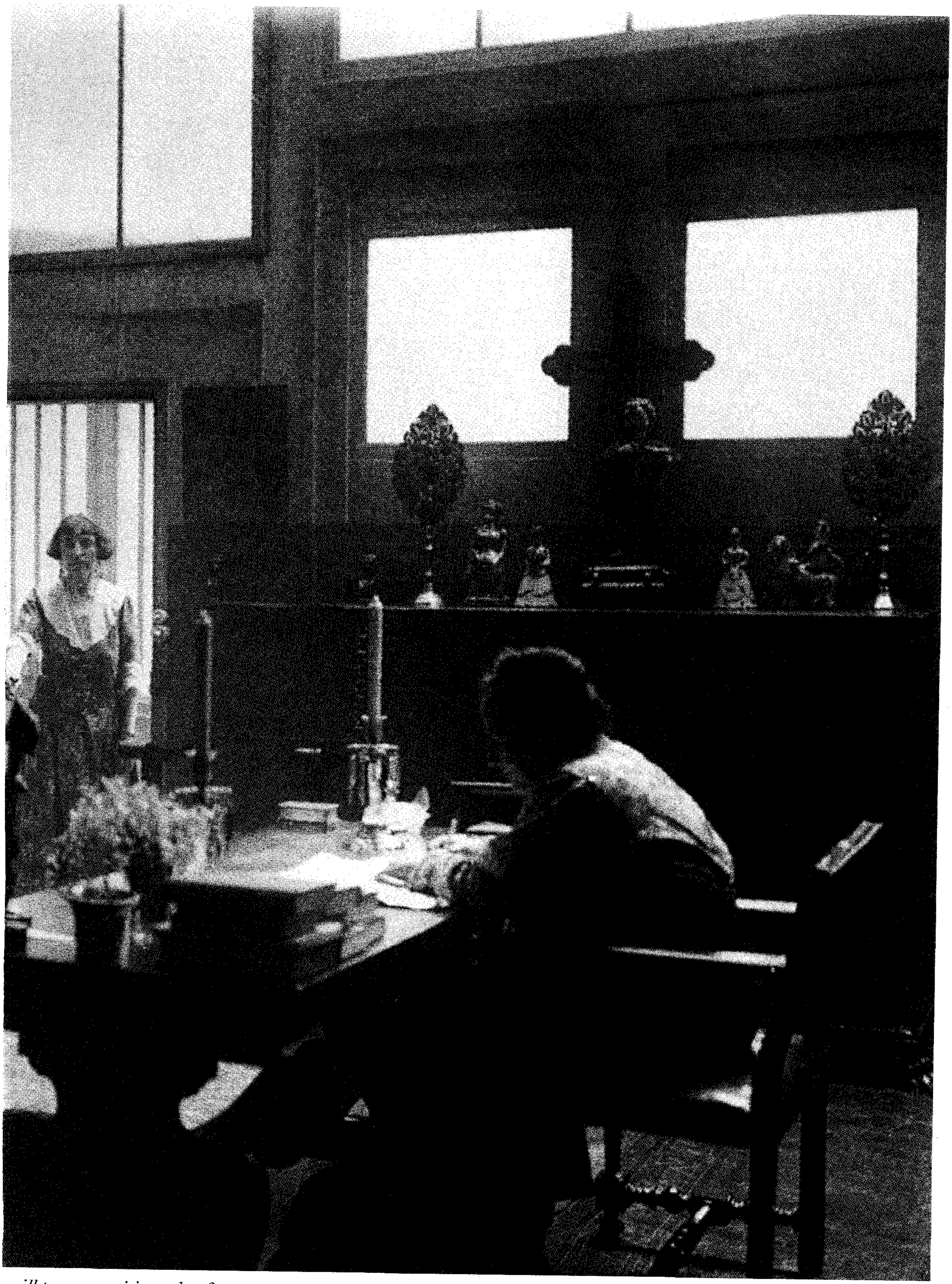
27 Rue de Fleurus, Paris, around 1922. Without Alice Toklas, Stein might not have



will to go on writing what for many years almost no one had any interest in reading. Photograph by Man Ray .

> corduroy or velvet and her crinkly hair was brushed back and twisted up high behind her jolly, intelligent face. . . . The year before Gertrude had lived in Fiesole—and she trudged down one hill and across town and up another to see us . . . and arrive[d] just sweating, her face parboiled. And when she sat down, fanning herself with her broad-brimmed hat with its wilted, dark brown ribbon, she exhaled a vivid steam all around her. When she got up she frankly used to pull her clothes off from where they stuck to her great legs. Yet with all this she was not at all repulsive. On the contrary, she was positively, richly attractive in her grand *ampleur*. She always seemed to like her own fat anyway and that usually helps other people to accept it. She had none of the funny embarrassments Anglo-Saxons have about flesh. She gloried in hers.

As for Toklas (to whom the bisexual Dodge was not drawn), she

> was slight and dark, with beautiful gray eyes hung with black lashes—and she had a drooping, Jewish nose, and her eyelids drooped, and the corners of her red mouth and the lobes of her ears drooped under the black folded Hebraic hair, weighted down, as they were, with long heavy Oriental earrings. . . . She looked like Leah, out of the Old Testament, in her half-Oriental get-up—her blues and browns and oyster whites—her black hair—her barbaric chains and jewels—and her melancholy nose.

Dodge goes on to extend the comparison to the dinner table: Gertrude "loved beef and I used to like to see her sit down in front of five pounds of rare meat three inches thick and with strong wrists wielding knife and fork, finish it with gusto, while Alice ate a little slice daintily, like a cat." Soon after the visit, even though Dodge was a tireless promoter of Stein's work, Stein dropped her—and Dodge was convinced that Toklas was behind it. She cites the incident that she believes sealed her fate: "One day at lunch, Gertrude, sitting opposite me in Edwin's"—the absent Dodge's—"chair, sent me such a strong look over the table that it seemed to cut across the air to me in a band of electrified steel—a smile travelling across on it—powerful—Heavens! I remember it *now* so keenly! At that Alice arose hastily and ran out of the room on to the terrace." Stein went after her and returned saying that Toklas did not want her lunch: "She feels the heat today." Dodge adds, "From that time on, Alice began to separate Gertrude and me—*poco-poco*."

WORRY TANK
What if it doesn't work?
What if it all blows up in our faces?
What if somebody sues?
What happens if it works... all too well?
What happens ten years down the line?
THEN WHAT?
R. Chast

Ten years later, Man Ray took a famous photograph of Stein and Toklas at 27 Rue de Fleurus. They sit at opposite ends of a low table in front of a fireplace above which modernist works hang—Gertrude fat, handsome, comfortable, benevolent, Alice thin, plain, tense, sour. The photograph is a kind of parody of the conventional society portrait of a husband and wife at home—it shimmers with the genre's sense of appearances being kept up and things not being said. The word "lesbian" was never publicly uttered by either of them about their relationship—as it was the custom of the day not to utter it. But the intensity of their love is documented by Stein's erotic poems (published after her death), by the memoirs of contemporaries, and, in one extraordinary instance, by a piece of literary vandalism.

Toklas writes in her "Food in the Bugey" chapter that "as the dreary dismal months dragged on provisioning became easier and more abundant, except for meat and butter," and she adds, "More people came to see us, even from Lyon, which is seventy miles distant. All in the *Résistance*, naturally." When I read this in the fifties, the last sentence did not cause me to smile knowingly, as it does today. Then it went without saying that the people Stein and Toklas saw during the war were the good guys. But today I know that at least one of the people who came to see Stein and Toklas at Culoz was not a good guy—indeed, was one of the very worst guys, convicted of collaboration after the war and sentenced to a lifetime of hard labor.

He was Bernard Faÿ, a French university professor and writer, a gay man in his late forties, who came from a wealthy Royalist Catholic family, and whose right-wing connections led to his appointment, in 1940, as head of the Bibliothèque Nationale (replacing a Jew). Faÿ had been a close friend of Stein's since the early twenties—one of the few close friends with whom she didn't eventually quarrel and break. A photograph of him with Stein at Bilignin shows him to be a heavyset man with a mustache and glossy dark hair. Not visible in the photograph is a clubfoot, the result of polio in childhood. His academic field was American history and culture (he had a graduate degree from Harvard, and among his books are biographies of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, a work called "The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America," and a study of American novelists), but he also cultivated the avant-garde arts, and was a busy promoter of Stein's writings in France (he translated "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" into French, and co-translated an abbreviated version of "The Making of Americans"). In 1966—twenty years after his conviction and sentencing, fifteen years after he escaped from a prison hospital and fled to Switzerland, and eight years after he was pardoned by François Mitterrand—Faÿ wrote a memoir called "Les Précieux," in which he identified himself as Stein and Toklas's protector during the war. Part of his job as head of the Bibliothèque, he writes, was to act as adviser to Pétain, and once a month he travelled from Paris to Vichy to confer with the old man. During one of their meetings, he found an opportunity to speak "about Gertrude, her genius, the peril she was in, and, more particularly, about the danger that she might freeze to death in the coming winter." He goes on:

> Before the meeting ended the Maréchal dictated a letter to the sous-prefect at Belley, entrusting Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas to his care, and directing him to see to it that they had everything needed to keep warm during the winter, as well as ration coupons for meat and butter. I came to Vichy quite regularly, and I telephoned the sous-prefect to remind him of his instructions. During this horrible period of occupation, misery, and nascent civil war, my two friends lived a peaceful life. They didn't lack courage, they didn't lack intelligence, they didn't lack a sense of reality, and they didn't lack coal.

This account—along with a paragraph in a letter of 1955 from Faÿ to a Mr. Monahan, giving a shortened version of the story—is the only known documentary evidence of Faÿ's intervention. Stein's and Toklas's biographers accept it as true. But Stein and Toklas never mentioned it in anything they wrote about their wartime experiences. Stein, in a letter written in March, 1946, four months before her death, in which she defended Faÿ to the court that later convicted him, noted that he had saved her collection of paintings, but omitted to say that he had saved her life. Toklas, who lived until 1967, was similarly silent on the subject. In nothing she wrote—including letters trying to get help for Faÿ in prison—did Toklas acknowledge Faÿ's wartime protection. Does this mean that Faÿ was lying about his intervention in order to make himself look good? Or was he telling the truth, and Stein and Toklas kept silent because they couldn't bring themselves to admit to the world that they had been mixed up with a collaborator?

The answer to the question was given to me in the fall of 2002 by a professor of English named Edward M. Burns. I had been much taken with an essay he and another English professor, Ulla E. Dydo, had written, entitled "Gertrude Stein: September 1942 to September 1944," and published as an appendix in their collection "The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Thornton Wilder" (1996). Burns and Dydo are distinguished Stein scholars. Burns had previously edited a two-volume collection of the letters between Stein and Carl Van Vechten (Van Vechten was the friend whose slavish devotion to Stein practically matched Toklas's; in his letters he called her Baby Woojums—he was Papa Woojums and Toklas was Mama Woojums); a book of Alice Toklas's letters called "Staying on Alone"; and an illustrated book of Stein's writings on Picasso. Dydo, for her part, has produced "A Stein Reader," numerous papers on Stein published in scholarly journals, and a monumental critical study, "Gertrude Stein: The Language That Rises, 1923-1934," to come out in the fall. But, in their essay on Stein in the Second World War, Burns and Dydo do not pull their punches in dealing with her problematic relationship to Faÿ, and they are equally stern about her perverse project, begun in late 1941 and evidently instigated by Faÿ, of translating a book of Pétain's speeches into English. Stein was not alone, of course, in her admiration for Pétain, the hero of Verdun. "What is difficult to understand, however, is how Stein continued with the project once edicts against Jews were issued and deportations begun," Burns and Dydo write, adding:

> It is as if in 1942-43 she was insulated from understanding what was happening. She had always been conservative, reactionary, and fearful of communism, and in the Spanish Civil War she had been anti-Loyalist. We do not know to what extent she continued to rely on Faÿ's judgment and what she understood of his political activities, his active anti-Semitism, his hatred of Bolshevism, his collaboration. . . . In "Wars I Have Seen," filled with astute observation of daily life, a reactionary tone sometimes creates discomfort. What she understood about Faÿ and how she saw the situation remains a troublesome puzzle.

A page earlier, Dydo and Burns write of Faÿ's escape from a prison hospital, on September 30, 1951, "with the help of friends." One of these friends, they write, was Alice Toklas: "By means of the sale of one or more works on paper by Picasso, Toklas helped to finance the escape." I looked for the source of this arresting information, but there was none—neither in the text nor in a footnote. I telephoned one of the authors, and this led to a series of meetings with Burns, Dydo, and another Stein scholar, William Rice, at Burns's apartment, on East Tenth Street in Manhattan.

Burns is a burly, affable, and loquacious man of fifty-nine, who entered the Stein world when he was an undergraduate at Brooklyn College and took a course on American literature which Dydo was teaching there. Dydo's teaching of Stein, Burns said, was his first encounter with Stein's "real," or experimental, writing—as opposed to her accessible, "audience" writing—and the beginning of the serious interest in Stein which became his life's work. Before writing the Ph.D. thesis that was to become the Stein-Van Vechten volumes, Burns taught at the Charles Evans Hughes High School in Chelsea. (His own high-school diploma, he told me, was jeopardized, because he refused to sign the loyalty oath that was then a requirement of graduation.) He now teaches at William Paterson University, in New Jersey.

Dydo is a slender, elegant woman of seventy-eight, who speaks with a European accent and has a tart manner that struggles with, and is defeated by, a deep underlying softheartedness. She grew up in Switzerland and came to this country in the late forties to get a master's degree at Bryn Mawr and then a Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin. Her dissertation was on Allen Tate. "Tate interested me when I started," Dydo said at one of our meetings. "But he didn't continue to interest me. In the dissertation I virtually said, 'This work isn't interesting.' He was a traditionalist. And all that Southern business. I started reading Stein on my

"Instead of 'Roger and out,' can you go back to saying 'Good night'?"

• •

own at Wisconsin, and that *was* interesting." After Wisconsin, Dydo taught for a few years at the Brearley School, in Manhattan, then at Vassar, Brooklyn, and Bronx Community Colleges.

Rice, a tall, thin man of seventy-two, with a sad and very kind face, is primarily a painter and actor, and therefore has a slightly different status in the trio. In the Thornton Wilder book and the new Dydo book, for example, he is given billing as "with William Rice." He entered the Stein world in 1980, when Burns hired him to do research and to type the manuscript of the Van Vechten book, and he remained to work with Burns and Dydo as a valued research assistant.

Burns and Dydo toil in different parts of the Stein vineyard. Burns has all the impulses of a biographer, though he lacks one crucial biographer's trait: the arrogant desire to impose a narrative on the stray bits and pieces of a life that wash up on the shores of biographical research. He is content to leave the bits and pieces as they are, and offer them in the footnotes and introductions and appendixes of the collections of letters and other writings he gathers. His appetite for research into Stein's life is almost unappeasable. He goes where no one else has thought of going, and comes back with trophies of great worth.

Dydo's concern is with Stein's texts, of which she is an extremely close reader, perhaps the closest reader Stein has ever had. She is a leading figure in the recent movement to accord Stein the status of a modernist master and to read her work with sympathetic, rather than hostile, incomprehension. Indeed, as Jennifer Ashton, one of the new Stein critics, reports without irony in a paper entitled "Gertrude Stein for Anyone," published in the journal *ELH* in 1997, "Among more recent critical accounts that situate her as a precursor to postmodernism, unintelligibility—refigured as indeterminacy or indefinition—has become Stein's strongest virtue." Dydo's essays and her new book reflect an affinity for Stein's experimental writing so strong that it almost persuades the reader that he or she, too, can pick up any Stein text and read it with rapt delight. Dydo cherishes the anarchy of Stein's language. "By lifting words from the lockstep of standard usage, [Stein] stops us from unthinking association with things, ideas, and formulations," she writes in "The Language That Rises." "This process also does away with all the hierarchical trappings of grammar and with the distinction between important and unimportant words. Words cease to be signifiers and become objects in themselves." But Dydo has no illusions about the difficulty of Stein's writing. "Is Stein worth the effort to figure her out?" she pauses to ask in the new book, and allows the question to hover over its six hundred and fifty-nine pages.

Twenty years ago, Dydo set herself the herculean task of establishing a true text for Stein's work. "Anybody who has ever copied or memorized a Stein piece knows that it is difficult to transcribe Stein accurately," Dydo writes in an essay called "How to Read Gertrude Stein," published in 1984 in the *Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship*. "Stein's syntax, grammar, and punctuation do not allow the typist or reader to rely unthinkingly on language habits when preparing or proofreading a Stein text." Accordingly, typists' and typesetters' errors that would leap out of texts written in ordinary English do not leap out of Stein's texts, and can be dislodged only through the painstaking comparison of printed texts to manuscript. For more than two decades, Dydo has been reading printed texts against manuscripts and finding significant errors.

One of her most significant corrections was to the text of "Stanzas in Meditation," a magisterially impenetrable work, written in 1932—the same year, as it happens, that the beguilingly easy "Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" was written—but not published until 1956, by Yale. The book-length "Stanzas," characterized by one critic as "perhaps the dreariest long poem in the world," and by Dydo herself as "forbiddingly difficult," makes demands on the reader which only the most heroic of Steinians will not balk at. While comparing the manuscript and published versions of "Stanzas in Meditation," Dydo came across something extremely odd. In the manuscript, she found that almost everywhere the auxiliary verb "may" appeared Stein had crossed it out and put in the word "can." For example, the lines "They may lightly send it away to say / That they will not change it if they may" were altered to "They can lightly send it away to say / That they will not change it if they can." In addition, when the month of May appeared it was crossed out and "day" or "today" was substituted. The revisions make no sense and are clear disimprovements. In some cases, the changes "twist the language to incomprehensible, even un-English phrasing," Dydo writes in "The Language That Rises," as in "may be they shall be spared" changed to "can they shall be spared." The published text of the "Stanzas" was set from a typescript that reflected the revisions, and, until Dydo examined the manuscript and a hitherto unexamined earlier typescript, no one knew that all the awkward "can"s in the poem had originally been "may"s and the "today"s and "day"s had been "May"s. Why had Stein subverted her work in this way? Dydo could not answer the question.

Then, in the summer of 1980, she had a dream that gave her the answer. Her painstaking work of comparison of manuscript and printed text was being done at the Beinecke Library, at Yale, where most of Stein's manuscripts repose. Dydo would make periodic trips to New Haven and stay with a friend, but that summer there was no room at the friend's house, and Dydo had to make do with Spartan accommodations at a place called the Graduate Club. "It's the most depressing place there is," she told me. "It is a ramshackle old wood house. The boards creak. The rooms are not much more than monks' cells. There are sinks and narrow beds. There is no air-conditioning. But it was close to the Beinecke and it was cheap. And that's where the dream came."

Dydo dreamed of an incident that Stein records in "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," in which she accidentally comes upon the manuscript of an early work of fiction. Stein does not identify the work, but we assume that it is "QED." "The funny thing about this short novel is that she completely forgot about it for many years," Stein writes in Toklas's voice, and goes on:

> She remembered herself beginning a little later writing the Three Lives but this first piece of writing was completely forgotten, she had never mentioned it to me, even when I first knew her. She must have forgotten about it almost immediately. This spring just two days before our leaving for the country she was looking for some manuscript . . . and she came across these two carefully written volumes of this completely forgotten first novel.

When Dydo awoke in her stifling room at the Graduate Club, she knew in a flash that the word "may" in the "Stanzas" was connected to May Bookstaver, the thinly disguised love object of "QED." This illumination was confirmed by Leon Katz, a Stein scholar with whom Dydo spoke a few days later, and who told her that when he interviewed Alice Toklas in the early fifties she had told him of the jealous rage that possessed her when she read the "forgotten" novel. In a paper published in 1985 in the *Chicago Review* entitled "Stanzas in Meditation: The Other Autobiography," Dydo writes, "What aroused Alice Toklas's jealousy was less the love affair itself than the discovery that, when Stein and Toklas had exchanged 'confessions' upon falling in love, Stein had not told about the relationship with May." She goes on:

> Alice, who had known nothing about this relationship, was enraged. She destroyed—or made Gertrude destroy—May's letters, which had served as the basis for the early novel. She became, as she put it, "paranoid about the name May." That paranoia appears to be the key to the revisions of the text of *Stanzas*.

"How do you imagine the scene?" I asked Dydo. She and Burns and Rice and I were sitting around a table in an alcove of Burns's living room, a light-filled space sparsely furnished with modernist furniture, its walls crammed with paintings, drawings, and photographs. "Do you think Alice stood over Gertrude and watched her change the 'may's to 'can's?"

"No," Dydo said.

"No," Rice said.

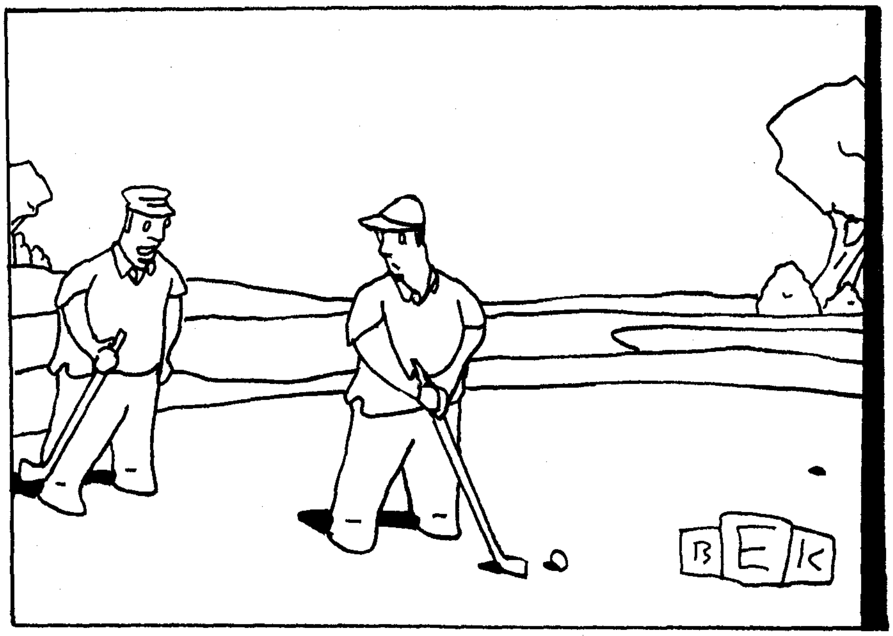
"It's far more punitive for Alice to say, 'You go there and you do it! You do it tonight! In your room!' " Dydo made her normally pleasant voice become a harsh bark.

"Go to the corner and do it," Rice said.

"The manuscript tells a terrible story," Burns said. "The force with which these words are crossed out. The anger with which this was done. Some of the slashes go right through the paper."

"You almost expect to see blood," Rice said.

Stein's acceptance of the punishment inflicted on her poem by the infuriated Toklas is almost beyond understanding. How could a serious writer agree to such a crazy demand? But what does one know about other people's intimate lives? We know that jealousy can drive people to dire acts. We accept the idea of sadomasochism. Certain reports by contemporaries—and hints that Stein herself dropped—suggest that the "can"/"may" episode was not an isolated event but part of a regular repertoire of sadomasochistic games the couple played. The



"Remember thoughts?"

Stein with her brother Leo in 1906. When he moved out, they divided the paintings and never met again. Picasso visiting Stein and Toklas (far right) at Bilignin in 1930.

BANCROFT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY (1);

most striking of the reports is Hemingway's. In his memoir "A Moveable Feast," he writes of an exchange he overheard between Stein and Toklas whose violence so unnerved him that it effectively ended his friendship with Stein. Hemingway tells of coming to see Stein at 27 Rue de Fleurus and being told to wait by a maid, who brings him a glass of eau-de-vie. He continues:

> The colorless alcohol felt good on my tongue and it was still in my mouth when I heard someone speaking to Miss Stein as I had never heard one person speak to another; never, anywhere, ever.
>
> Then Miss Stein's voice came pleading and begging, saying, "Don't, pussy. Don't. Don't, please don't. I'll do anything, pussy, but please don't do it. Please don't. Please don't, pussy."

What Hemingway wrote about Stein and Toklas in "A Moveable Feast" has been regarded with skepticism. It is thought to be his revenge for Stein's putting him down in "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas." ("Gertrude Stein and Sherwood Anderson are very funny on the subject of Hemingway. . . . They both agreed that they have a weakness for Hemingway because he is such a good pupil. He is a rotten pupil, I protested. You don't understand, they both said, it is so flattering to have a pupil who does it without understanding it," and "He looks like a modern and he smells of the museums.") But in the light of what pussy did to Stein's poem Hemingway's account no longer seems so suspect.

It was in the course of a trip to Europe in 1968 to collect letters for "Staying on Alone" that Burns stumbled on the story of the Faÿ escape which made its way into the appendix of the Thornton Wilder book. On the same trip, he visited Belley and spoke to Maurice Sivan, who was the *sous-préfet* in Faÿ's story (misspelled Sivain in Stein's story of the terrifying moment at the lawyers)—and who confirmed it in every detail. So that question was answered. The answer to the question about Toklas and the escape was more tortuous. "Four people told me about it," Burns said. "First, there were the Knapiks—Harold and Virginia—who became good friends of Alice's after Gertrude's death. They were Americans living in Paris. Harold was an extraordinary cook, and Alice put several of his recipes into her cookbook."

When Burns uttered the name Harold Knapik, I could see the page in the cookbook on which Knapik's recipe for Szekely Goulash appeared, and I could even recite his prefatory comment: "This is the goulash that I mentioned. It is not bad but its origin on the Hungarian plain is reflected a little insistently." The remark stayed with me—it is the sort of thing Clovis Sangrail might have said about goulash—and endeared Knapik to me. And now he

Toklas and Stein motoring in provincial France in the twenties. Stein and Bernard Faÿ, the collaborator who was her friend and protector.

was about to emerge as a real and no doubt very different person from the one I had imagined. I had already had to revise my idea of another contributor to the cookbook (Toklas gathered these contributions into a chapter called "Recipes from Friends"). This was Fania Marinoff, whose Lamb Curry for Six is one of the most stained of all the pages in my copy of the book. In my imagination, Fania was a Jewish matriarch who lived on West End Avenue and never got out of her brunch coat. But from photographs in "The Letters of Gertrude Stein and Carl Van Vechten" I have had to accept the fact that Fania—the game second wife of the gay Van Vechten—was a beautiful and slender young Russian actress.

Burns paused for dramatic effect and said, "The Knapiks are dead now, so it's all right for me to say this: they were C.I.A. agents. Harold's cover—he was a musician—was that he was working on a book on counterpoint; Virginia worked at the American Embassy." My idea of Knapik remained intact. Of course he was a C.I.A. agent.

Burns went on, "The Knapiks told me that they knew of Alice's involvement in the escape but said that a certain Mme. Azam was the person I should talk to, because she knew most about it. Mme. Azam, née Cohen, was a rich, cultivated elderly Frenchwoman who lived in Paris. She was a Jewish convert to Catholicism and a good friend of Faÿ's and, eventually, of Alice's. She said that Faÿ walked with her on the street in Paris when she had to wear a yellow star. When I interviewed Mme. Azam, she said, 'Alice and I were influential in arranging for Bernard's escape. We helped with the money.' She told me that the people who got him out were dressed as nuns. Then she gave me an introduction to Faÿ and I went to see him."

"What did you make of him?" I asked Burns. "What was he like?"

"He was perfectly charming. I met him in a beautiful Paris apartment that belonged to his brother. I started to try to struggle along in French and he said no, it did him good to speak in English. He was a little wary of me at first and then gradually began to trust me. You know how it is when you're able to give bits and pieces of information that you have. He eventually became very warm and gave me some of his books. But I remember feeling uneasy and having the sense that this was not a very nice person. You have to understand that I was staying with Kahnweiler, who said, 'I know you're doing this for your work on Gertrude, but he's a perfectly detestable man.' " (Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler was the German Jewish art dealer who began to represent the Cubists in his gallery in Paris before their work was valuable; he had difficulties in the First World War because of his

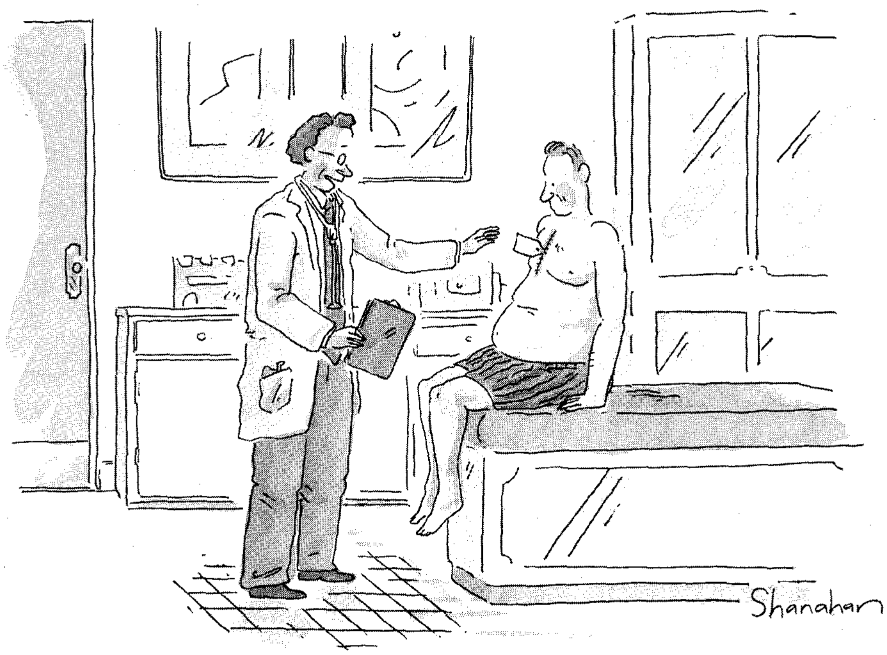
Germanness and in the Second World War because of his Jewishness.)

As Burns talked, Ulla Dydo and Bill Rice sipped beer and listened attentively, as though they, too, were hearing the story for the first time. Burns went on with his narrative: "When I went to see Faÿ, I played two roles. I was there for information and to get letters from him for the book. I felt a certain excitement—here was a man who knew Gertrude and about whom Gertrude had written. I'd ask him a question about Gertrude and the answer would be something Gertrude had said to him. It was like touching the shoes of a fisherman. But then there was my Jewishness—thank you very much. It's a situation where you feel unclean. You know that under normal circumstances you would not sit in the same room with this person." (In their appendix essay, Burns and Dydo note that "from July 1940 until June 1944, Faÿ was an editor of the only journal financed by the Germans, the anti-Jewish *La Gerbe*.")

A few weeks earlier, I had spoken on the telephone with Gilbert Harrison, who wrote an introduction to the Burns collection of Toklas's letters. (I had known him in the late nineteen-fifties, when he was the editor of *The New Republic*.) He, too, told me of a meeting he had had with Faÿ in Paris. It took place in 1937. Harrison, then a very young man, intended to call on Stein and Toklas, as many very young men did in those days. Three years earlier, he had attended one of Stein's American lectures (in Pasadena), had stopped her in the lobby afterward, and had talked with her for an hour. But now, on presenting himself at 27 Rue de Fleurus, he found no one home. He telephoned Faÿ (whom he had met in America through Stein), who told him that the women were in Bilignin, obligingly offered to arrange an invitation, and, in the meanwhile, asked him to lunch with him and his sister. "It was a very good and very elegant lunch, and the sister was so elegant herself that she hardly condescended to speak to us," Harrison said. He added, "One remark of Faÿ's I will never forget. 'Why don't you stay in Paris?' he said. 'I can arrange for you to get a scholarship, since you're not a Jew.' " I asked Harrison (who is a Jew) what he said. "I was absolutely silent," he replied.

In an introduction Faÿ wrote for the abbreviated edition of "The Making of Americans," he is (as in everything he wrote about and to Stein) obsequious to a degree that would be simply laughable were it not inflected by our knowledge of his sinister collaboration:

> I have seen her many times in town surrounded with her "Picassos" and her friends, always picturesque, always amusing, or in the country surrounded by flowers, dogs and her peasant neighbors which seem as much hers as flowers or dogs, because when she speaks of them and when she speaks to them, her voice and her understanding give them a realness that human beings only reach when they just get out of a dream to face for a very short time the true sharp life of early morning. . . . I have found Gertrude Stein always the same and always new. Every time I came near her it seemed to me that life and things became precise, that light was shining frankly on everything and with her I had the pleasure of talking as if words had a meaning and as if the meaning of everything, words and things, were pleasant.



"*Geez Louise—I left the price tag on.*"

Stein, on her side, wrote about Faÿ less inanely, but with fondness, in both "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" and "Everybody's Autobiography." After Carl Van Vechten, he was her staunchest supporter and helper. In "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," she writes, obviously as a kind of inside joke, of a first meeting with Faÿ that was unsuccessful: "Bernard Faÿ was not at all what Gertrude Stein expected and he and she had nothing in particular to say to each other." But presently "Gertrude Stein and Bernard Faÿ met again and this time they had a great deal to say to each other. Gertrude Stein found the contact with his mind stimulating and comforting. They were slowly coming to be friends." Stein cannot resist mischievously adding:

> I remember once coming into the room and hearing Bernard Faÿ say that the three people of first rate importance that he had met in his life were Picasso, Gertrude Stein and André Gide and Gertrude Stein inquired quite simply, that is quite right but why include Gide. A year or so later in referring to this conversation he said to her, and I am not sure you were not right.

Hemingway wrote bitterly—and he was not the only ex-friend to make this point—that "in the three or four years that we were good friends I cannot remember Gertrude Stein ever speaking well of any writer who had not written favorably about her work or done something to advance her career except for Ronald Firbank and, later, Scott Fitzgerald." Faÿ zealously performed both services. He frequently taught and lectured in America; thus, when Stein went on her American lecture tour he was able to pave the way for her at many universities. He also rehearsed her lectures with her; in fact, he taught her the technique of lecturing. Most important, he promoted Stein's work in France through his translations and flowery tributes.

Faÿ was the sycophant par excellence. An almost palpable odor of oily flattery emanates from the collection of his letters to Stein at the Beinecke. Over the twenty years of the friendship, the stationery and the handwriting change, but

"When I think of the as yet undreamed-of loopholes that are going to be available to you guys!"

• •

the obsequiousness never wavers. Even in the final letters, written from prison on stationery quite different from the luxe black-bordered writing paper on which Faÿ wrote his early notes, the habit of sucking up remains unbroken, as in the following, written on October 15, 1945:

> I feel and enjoy from my cell your affection and your vitality. As soon as you can, send me some of the things you have written recently. I am terribly eager to see it. "American literature" is the great fad now all over France and particularly here. I have been talking a lot about American writers and most of all about you here with a lot of people.

What was in it for Faÿ? What drew the Royalist anti-Semite to the Jewess in funny clothes? In his chapter on Stein in "Les Précieux," Faÿ writes thus of his first encounter with her, in 1924: "She was quite corpulent and vigorous and resembled a 2nd century Roman emperor who might have had Jewish blood. She had her hair cut very short. Her fine face shone with authority and intelligence and she was wearing a blouse with a variegated embroidered vest and a short khaki skirt and khaki stockings and yellow leather sandals." Anti-Semites, as is well known, often actually have best friends who are Jews; it comes with the territory. It gives them a thrill. Stein would have been a perfect object for the obligatory transgressive fantasy of friendship with an exceptional Chosen Person. In "Les Précieux," Stein's Jewishness looms large. Faÿ writes of walking with her at Bilignin and talking about "the most daring of subjects." "She liked to talk to me about God," he writes, and continues:

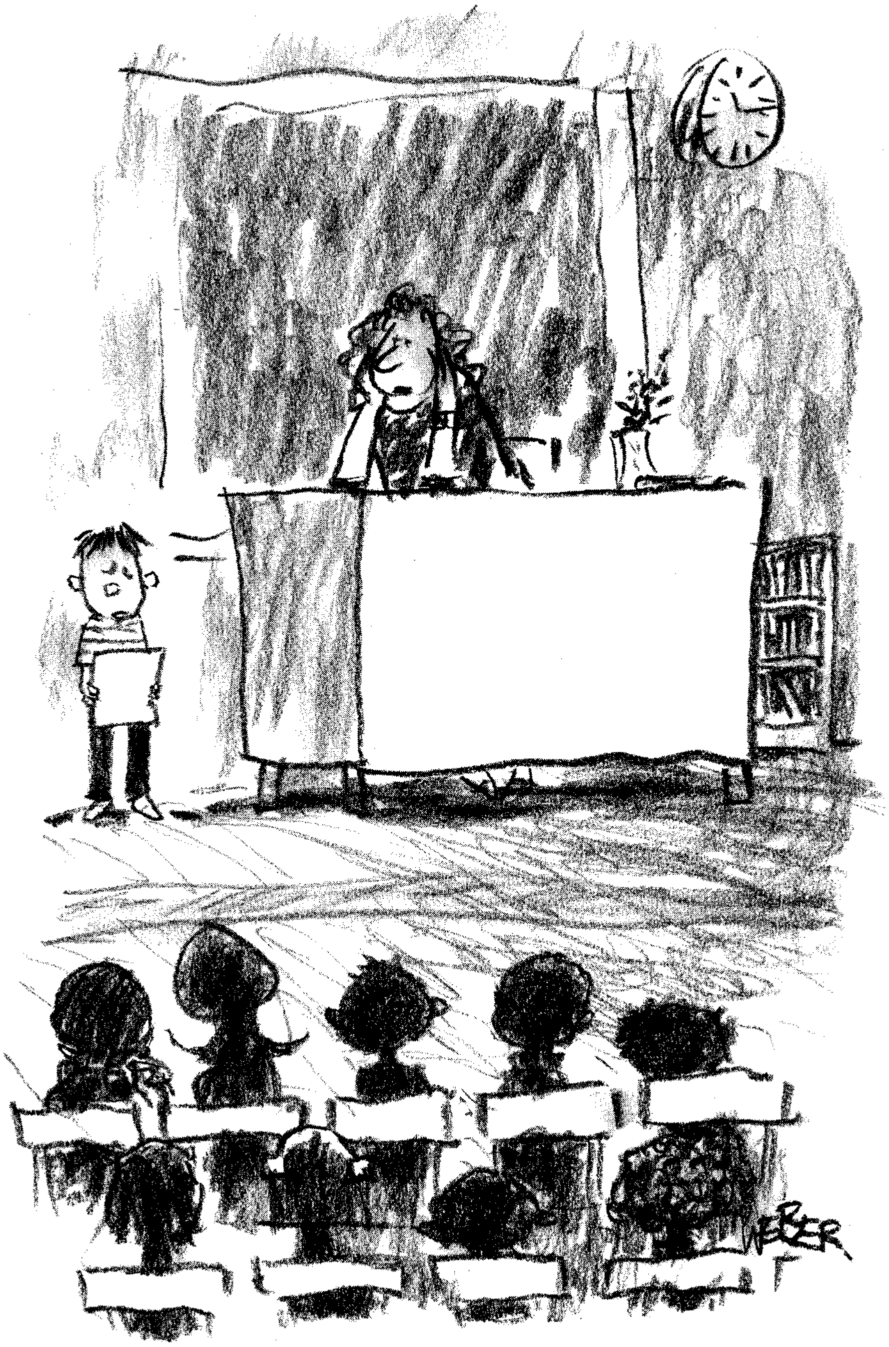
> "Now Bernard," she said to me, "you must understand that Jews have never taken the afterlife into account. In the Bible the purpose of God is to improve life on earth, to protect the faithful and guide his people . . . but there's never a question of an afterlife or eternity." I forbore to bring up my own knowledge of the Bible, which was more direct than hers, and contented myself with replying, "A material, earthly, practical God is an idol. Only a spiritual God who is superior to men and their limited notion of time and space and life and death merits the adoration which the Jews, wise and worthy people, could never have given him if they had not felt in his presence the terror that the other world, the Beyond inspires."

Readers of "Everybody's Autobiography" may recall Stein's account of her rueful early realization that "there was no mention of everlasting" in the Hebrew Scriptures. "When I was about eight," she writes, "I was surprised to know that in the Old Testament there was nothing about a future life or eternity. I read it to see and there was nothing there. There was a God of course and he spoke but there was nothing about eternity." Whether the conversation Faÿ records actually took place or whether he invented it after rereading "Everybody's Autobiography" can be known only to the denizens of the Beyond. Faÿ, apparently unable to relinquish his Jewish theme, goes on to say that once, when he had said something clever about Picasso, Stein "turned to me and looked me straight in the eye and said, 'Be honest, Bernard, admit it. You are much too intelligent not to be Jewish.' " Of course, it's possible that Stein uttered this cliché, but somehow one doubts it. She prided herself on her originality and unpredictability. She would sometimes say extraordinarily silly things, but they were her own silly things, never the silly things other people had said.

In "Wars I Have Seen," there is a telling moment when Stein—in the course of absurdly remarking that Hitler wants to destroy Germany because he is an Austrian and thus harbors a deep unconscious hatred of Germany—pauses to say that when she first delivered herself of this aperçu, at a dinner party in Paris in 1935, "they all thought that I was only trying to be bright but not at all it is true." Stein's habitual attempt to be bright is a defining characteristic of her life and her art. She seemed to shine when she walked into a room, and the work, even at its most hermetic, possesses a glitter that keeps one reading long past the time when it is normal to stop reading a text that makes no sense. The showing off that is the youngest child's prerogative and mandate was forged by the grown Stein into a formidable social and artistic tool.

Although Thornton Wilder's letters to Stein are as complimentary as Faÿ's, they are in no way off-putting; the compliments have an ironic edge that only brings the genuineness of his affection for her into relief. Thus when (in a footnote) Dydo and Burns quote a letter Wilder wrote to Alexander Woollcott in September, 1933, in which he takes a hard look at Stein's evasiveness about her Jewishness, we do not feel that he is being two-faced. Rather, we feel that he is cutting to the chase:

> I suppose you've read the Alice B. Toklas. Well, Gertrude Stein is a fine, big serene girl, is she? beyond prejudice,—beyond being touched by the world's good or bad opinion? THEN: why does she never mention that she or Miss Toklas are Jewesses? And why in the bundle of pages which were all that I could endure of that 1000 page work ("the first



"For me, it all began one gray and chilly morning in the grim maternity ward of a borderline hospital on the Upper West Side."

• •

great book written in the future") "The Making of Americans" does she not mention that the family she is analyzing in such detail is a Jewish family. And why in fabricating a fictitious name for her family does she contrive one that only faintly might be Jewish.

It's Henry Adams' wife, again. It's possible to make books of a certain fascination if you scrupulously leave out the essential.

In "Wars I Have Seen," Stein continues to leave out the essential. She just can't seem to bring herself to say that she and Toklas are Jewish. But the Nazis' persecution of the Jews is clearly on her mind, and the book is full of indirect allusions to it. She writes of the Dreyfus case and anti-Semitism, mentions Jewish refugees, and tells a story that could well be a disguised story about herself:

> There is this about a Jewish woman, a Parisienne, well known in the Paris world. She and her family took refuge in Chambery when the persecutions against the Jews began in Paris. And then later, when there was no southern zone, all the Jews were supposed to have the fact put on their carte d'identité and their food card, she went to the prefecture to do so and the official whom she saw looked at her severely. Madame he said, have you any proof with you that you are a Jewess, why no she said, well he said if you have no actual proof that you are a Jewess, why do you come and bother me, why she said I beg your pardon, no he said I am not interested unless you can prove you are a Jewess, good day he said and she left. It was she who told the story. Most of the French officials were like that really like that.

The discussion of the Dreyfus case and anti-Semitism is abruptly interrupted by a strange passage that would seem to belong to one of the experimental works rather than to the book in hand, which is written in (more or less) ordinary English. The passage goes:

> He can read acasias, hands and faces. Acasias are for the goat, and the goat gives milk, very necessary these days and hands and faces are hands and faces, and dreams when one is dancing and falls asleep are real, and all this has this to do with anti-semitism that it is true and not real and real and not true.

Claudia Roth Pierpont, in an essay on Stein in her book "Passionate Minds: Women Rewriting the World," wittily holds up this "senseless babble" as an instance of Stein's "long-standing way of handling all serious unpleasantness: pretend it isn't there, and then tumble into nonsense or baby talk, so that perhaps it will be persuaded that you are not there, either—or, at least, that you are not a reasonable target." I felt there was truth in Pierpont's observation, but wondered whether her impatience with Stein, like my own, wasn't based on a too early diagnosis of senselessness. Knowing of Dydo's dedication to making what she calls "Gertrude-sense" of Stein's unintelligible texts, at my next meeting with the trio of Stein scholars I read aloud the passage and asked Dydo if she knew what acacias had to do with anti-Semitism.

"I have no idea," she said.

I made a lame joke: "Maybe you could dream about it."

"I can't dream on command," Dydo answered, deadpan. "But I'll see what I can do."

And over the next week she sent me e-mails about elements of the passage, identifying the acacia tree as the Old Testament burning bush and the goat as a sacrificial animal, and pointing out that the passage is led up to by several pages of musings about the imprisonment of innocent people—such as Oscar Wilde, as well as Dreyfus. I myself began to look and look again at the passage, and was rewarded for my persistence with an illumination. I realized that the phrase "dreams when one is dancing and falls asleep" referred to a dance marathon in Chicago to which Stein and Toklas had been taken during the American lecture tour. In these horrifying Depression entertainments, impoverished young couples competed for prize money, dancing, sometimes for weeks, until they dropped. In "Everybody's Autobiography," Stein describes the marathon: "Here there was nothing neither waking nor sleeping, they were all young ones and they were moving as their bodies were drooping. They had been six weeks without sleeping and some no longer had another one with them they were moving and drooping alone but when there were two of them one was more clinging than moving." (Stein also wrote to Carl Van Vechten about the marathon: "They are like shades modern shades out of Dante and they move so strangely and they lead each other about one asleep completely and the other almost, it is the most unearthly and most beautiful movement I have ever seen.")

Now, in June, 1943—Stein announces the progressive months of the war as if keeping a diary—she identifies with the sleepwalking dancers: "It is true and not real and real and not true." A few pages earlier, after narrating the story of the *sous-préfet's* warning to flee to Switzerland or be put in a concentration camp, she concluded, "But what was so curious in the whole affair was its unreality." She also wrote of the incident, "It took us some weeks to get over it, but we finally did." But it took her from February to June to bring herself to tell the story, and surely she had not got over it. "Wars I Have Seen" is permeated with Stein's anxiety. Two years earlier, Stein had channelled her dread into a novel called "Mrs. Reynolds," about a couple of ordinary people who are living in the oppressive shadow of two sinister men called Angel Harper and Joseph Lane, meant to represent Hitler and Stalin. Richard Bridgman, in his classic study "Gertrude Stein in Pieces" (1970), dryly remarked that " 'Mrs. Reynolds' cannot be advanced as a pleasurable reading experience." For most people, it is an impossible reading experience; the book is written in Stein's most cruelly boring experimental style. "There is nothing historical about this book except the state of mind," Stein wrote in an epilogue. "Wars I Have Seen" records both history and a state of mind, and there is nothing quite like it in the literature of war or, for that matter, in Stein's writings.

It is a work of realism struggling against itself. "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" reflected Stein's deep, almost purring satisfaction with its form. "Wars I Have Seen" reflects Stein's ambivalence toward the form she has chosen or that, perhaps, has chosen her. In the early pages of the book, there is an almost audible clash of wills between Stein's divided selves. We can almost hear the one self say, No, I will not narrate, and the other say, Please try. In "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," Stein boasts that her story "Melanctha" "was the first definite step away from the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century in literature." For forty years, Stein has been working as a twentieth-century modernist innovator. But now she is obliged to consider the possibility that the nineteenth century did not end when she and everyone else thought it did, but is ending only now, with the arrival of barbarism. "Realism was the last thing the nineteenth century did completely. Anybody can understand that there is no point in being realistic about here and now . . . it is not the nineteenth but the twentieth century, there is no realism now, life is not real it is not earnest, it is strange which is an entirely different matter." And yet, paradoxically, something tells Stein that there is great point in being realistic now, that life is indeed real and earnest and that she must try to rouse herself. "The horrors the fears everybody's fears the helplessness of everybody's fears, so different from other wars makes this war like Shakespeare's plays." Stein knows better than to try to write like Shakespeare, but she also senses that the occasion demands that she not try to write like herself, either. Modernist experimentalism will not express what she wants (and doesn't want) to express.

The journalist Eric Sevareid was one of the first Americans to reach Culoz after the liberation of Paris. In his book "Not So Wild a Dream" (1946), he writes of meeting with Stein in early September, 1944, and reports that she told him that, "with all the difficulties, the isolation from lifelong friends, these had been the happiest years of her life." Readers of "Wars I Have Seen" will not believe her, of course. But if they have read Stein's other autobiographies they will not doubt the accuracy of Sevareid's reporting. It was a point of pride with Stein never to appear unhappy. In "Everybody's Autobiography," she writes, "About an unhappy childhood well I never had an unhappy anything. What is the use of having an unhappy anything," and "If you write about yourself or anybody it sounds as if you were very unhappy and very bitter but generally speaking everybody living has a fairly cheerful time in living. . . . Any life you look at seems unhappy but any life lived is fairly cheerful, and whatever happens it goes on being so." Whatever happens it goes on being so may be the most oblivious of the oblivious things Stein kept permitting herself to say. Perhaps a girl whose mother dies of cancer when she is fourteen, after years of suffering, needs to develop calluses. What probably began as a defensive pose became an ingrained characteristic: Stein's preternatural cheerfulness may be her most outstanding personality trait. In "Wars I Have Seen," she is obliged to drop the pose and to acknowledge her profound unhappiness. It is surely no accident that in using the term "medieval" to describe the dark time in which she is living—"medieval means, that life and place and the crops you plant and your wife and children, all are uncertain. They can be driven away or taken away, or burned away, or left behind, that is what it is to be medieval"—she associates the term with "the dark and dreadful days of adolescence, in which predominated the fear of death." Stein, writing "Wars I Have Seen" at an age when fear of death is rather better founded than at fourteen (she is approaching seventy and will die of stomach cancer in 1946, at seventy-two), pauses to muse that "if everybody did not die the earth would be all covered over and I, I as I, could not have come to be and try as much as I can try not to be I, nevertheless, I would mind that so much, as much as anything, so then why not die, and yet and again not a thing, not a thing to be liking, not a thing." But it is the war's visible threats, rather than mortality's veiled ones, that are Stein's subject and the object of her terror. Over and over, she writes of her fearfulness and helplessness in the face of the evil she cannot bring herself to imagine and yet on some level has understood.

By the time Stein met with Sevareid, she had more than regained her cheerfulness, which may have clouded her memory of the five-year-long ordeal she had undergone. The "plot" of "Wars I Have Seen," if we can use that term to describe its narrative trajectory, is the change from Stein's hysterical despair alternating with rationalization, to hope alternating with fear, to unmitigated ecstatic joy when the Liberation comes.

During the period of despair, she writes, "Now when here in France when we all thought the young men were safe they are now all being taken away well it is like that, Shakespeare was right it is all just like that." The deportation of young Frenchmen to forced labor in Germany is one of her persistent themes. These deportations were, of course, of anguishing concern to the people in the village—to the parents and siblings of the young men and to the young men themselves—but one cannot help conjecturing that they also represented to Stein the spectre of what could happen to her and Toklas. When Stein reports the absurd advice she gave to a group of young men about to be shipped off to Germany—she tells them to "study" the Germans, "learn their language and get to know their literature, think of yourselves as a tourist and not as a prisoner"—one can only think that she was imagining her way into her own possible predicament, and whistling in the dark as she did so. The betrayals and denunciations she hears about on the long daily walks she takes with her dog in search of extra food have a similar personal resonance. She and Toklas are at the mercy of the villagers who could at any moment betray them as Americans and Jews. But the villagers never do—they are evidently as much in love with Stein as were the soldiers in the First World War who cranked her car and changed her tires.

Stein's growing willingness to keep her attention fixed on the actual occurs in tandem with—and is surely influenced by—the turning of the tide against the Germans. By the fall of 1943, it was beginning to be apparent that an Allied victory was only a matter of time. Life no longer seems unreal to Stein. In September, 1943, she sees things with great clarity:

> The one thing that everybody wants is to be free . . . not to be managed, threatened, directed, restrained, obliged, fearful, administered, they want none of these things they all want to feel free, the word discipline, and forbidden and investigated and imprisoned brings horror and fear into all hearts, they do not want to be afraid not more than is necessary in the ordinary business of living where one has to earn one's living and has to fear want and disease and death . . . the only thing that any one wants now is to be free, to be let alone, to live their life as they can, but not to be watched, controlled, and scared, no no, not.

Stein's account of the winter of 1943-1944—the fifth winter of the war, "just one winter too much"—renders the exhaustion of waiting for the end and also the fear of the dangerous wounded beast the Germans have become. ("Is it worse to be scared than to be bored, that is the question," she remarks at one point.) She reports the stories told to her by the people she meets on her walks: arrests, deportations, interrogations, killings are their usual subject. A moment of comic relief is offered by a woman who tells her about a woman in the town of Bourg who had just given birth to six puppy dogs. "Not possibly I said, but yes she said . . . in times like these women do console themselves with dogs and this does happen, of course the dogs dont survive they are kept in museums, but it does happen, not really I said, oh yes, she said, in Bourg they once had it happen to a nun, and when the doctor went to see her the dog would not let him come near her." Another walk yields a scene of melancholy poetry: Stein has walked high up a mountain and then, descending as it is getting dark and beginning to snow and sleet, she is passed by small groups of men—the young men who have hidden out in the mountains rather than be sent to Germany, and are coming down from their freezing lairs to have a meal and spend the night with their families.

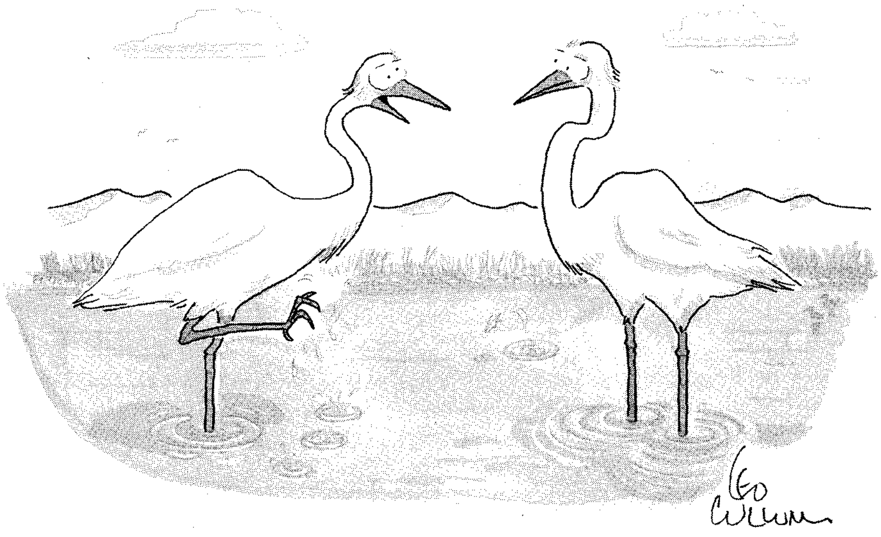
When the winter finally ends, and the invasion seems imminent, the word "Maquis" begins to appear more and more frequently in Stein's text. The narrative now pushes forward like a stream no longer choked by fallen trees and debris. The Normandy landing takes place, and the Germans stop acting like conquerors and begin to display their cravenness and *poshlust*. The villagers openly

"We're operating here on pure adrenaline."

make fun of them. But when, ten days after the landing, Stein and Toklas receive a letter from the Swiss consul in Lyons, "who has charge of American interests," inviting them to apply for repatriation, "we giggled we said that is optimism. Naturally American authorities not really realising what it is to live in an occupied country ask you to put down your religion your property and its value, as if anybody would as long as the Germans are in the country and in a position to take letters and read them if they want to. The American authorities say they are in a hurry for these facts but I imagine that all Americans will feel the same better keep quiet until the Germans are gone just naturally play possum just as long as one can. Just that." "Put down your religion" is as close as Stein will come to the point. The rueful consternation of Dydo, Burns, and Rice and the sharp criticism that Stein has received from less kindly disposed writers in regard to her apparent indifference to the fate of the Jews are not blunted by "Wars I Have Seen." While she covertly identifies with the persecuted Jews, overtly she distances herself from them. There are even passages that border on the anti-Semitic, such as her bizarre aperçu that the Jewish "instinct for publicity" is "the real basis of the persecution of the chosen people."

As the book progresses, there is less and less of this kind of stuff. When Stein finally finds her true voice, when she no longer needs to struggle against the here and now by retreating into silliness, the book becomes almost unbearably exciting and moving. On the day Paris is liberated:

> It was just like fourth of July in my youth in the San Joaquin valley, it was just as hot and we all went to-day that Paris was freed to put flowers on the soldiers monument, it had already been draped with flags and the maquis marched down the main street of Culoz, and then everybody stood at attention and sang the Marseillaise. . . . I like to call them maquis, that was what they were, when every moment was a danger, they had to receive arms they had to transport them and they had to hide them and they had to do sabotage and all the time a very considerable part of their countrymen did not at all believe in them, and there they were workmen, station masters, civil servants, tailors, barbers, anything, nobody knew but they naturally, and some of them looked pretty tired but my everybody was happy, everybody had the flag on their shoulders. . . . Paris was taken at noon and by eight o'clock all France was putting wreaths on their soldiers monument because of course every village has that, honneur aux maquis, and they say that Americans are at Aix-les-Bains only twenty-five kilometers away.

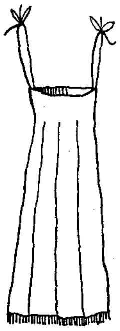

"Oh my God! I just stepped on something squishy."

When Stein meets her first Americans, "How we talked and how we patted each other in the good American way, and I had to know where they came from and where they were going and where they were born. In the last war we had come across our first American soldiers and it had been nice but nothing like this. . . . We went to look at their car the jeep, and I had expected it to be much smaller but it was quite big and they said did I want a ride and I said you bet I wanted a ride."

Stein invites two of the American soldiers to her house: "Here were the first Americans actually in the house with us, impossible to believe that only three weeks before the Germans had been in the village still and feeling themselves masters, it was wonderful. . . . That is all I can say about it wonderful, and I said you are going to sleep in beds where German officers slept six weeks ago, wonderful my gracious perfectly wonderful. How we talked that night . . . and my were we happy, we were, completely and truly happy and completely and entirely worn out with emotion."

"The writing in 'Wars I Have Seen' is magnificent," Ed Burns said with a mild air of surprise at a meeting at his house in February. He said he had picked up the book in preparation for our talks, and had forgotten, or perhaps had not realized, how remarkable it was. Dydo and Rice echoed his surprised admiration. All three prefer Stein's "real" writing to the "audience" writing, and when I confessed—as I am often obliged to—that the "real" writing is not congenial to me, they looked at me pityingly. "Well, you're honest," Dydo said kindly on one of these occasions. On another, while talking about the Thornton Wilder–Gertrude Stein book, I said in passing that I liked "Our Town," and Dydo gave me a dark look. "Is it too sentimental for you?" I asked. "Ugh," she said, and shuddered. At these times, I feel like someone who has ordered a cheeseburger at Lutèce.

Burns had just returned from Paris bearing major trophies of research. Before his trip, he had asked if there was anything he could do for me in Paris, and I had asked if he knew someone—a graduate student maybe—who might be able to pry loose from the authorities a copy of the transcript of Bernard Faÿ's trial. I knew from contemporary newspaper accounts that Faÿ had been convicted of persecuting French Freemasons, but I wanted to know more precisely what he had done, and whether he had received a just verdict. A French authority on the Vichy period named Pierre Assouline, to whom Burns had referred me earlier, and with whom I had spoken on the phone, said he believed the record of the trial was sealed, but gave me the name of the government office I might apply to for declassification, along with the address of a specialized library that would have information about Faÿ. Burns was vague about finding a graduate student, but took down the name and address of the government office and the library. A few days after his arrival in Paris, Burns sent me and Dydo the first of a series of increasingly excited e-mails about Faÿ's war record, which—his researcher's instincts aroused—he had decided to investigate himself. A visit to the specialized library had led Burns to a man named Lucien Sabah, a police official in the French Ministry of the Interior, who had written a book entitled "Une Police Politique de Vichy: Le Service des Sociétés Secrètes," in which Faÿ's persecution of Freemasons is reported in damning detail. Burns also learned of a boyfriend of Faÿ's named Geuydan de Roussel, who was a Gestapo agent, and who kept a journal of his own and Faÿ's activities for the Germans between 1940 and 1944. The flatly factual journal (which Sabah has edited and published in a small edition), establishing Faÿ's connection to the Gestapo, proved to be even more damning than the polemical Sabah book. Burns had told me that when he interviewed Faÿ he had said, "No one died because of me. I was not responsible for anyone's death."



But now Burns learned that Faÿ was responsible for many deaths. The prosecutor at Faÿ's trial (Sabah had seen the transcript) presented documents showing that, because of Faÿ's zeal in naming names by way of executing Pétain's 1940 order banning secret societies, a hundred and seventy thousand Masons had files created for them, sixty thousand were investigated, six thousand were imprisoned, nine hundred and ninety were deported, and five hundred and forty were shot or died in camps. (Burns and Dydo, in their appendix essay, put the Nazi persecution of Freemasons into a larger context: "Fearful of religious toleration, political compromise, loyalty to local authority and the power of secrecy, totalitarian states—from Nazi Germany and Austria, Fascist Italy, Spain, and Portugal to the Soviet Union and Communist China—banned Freemasonry.") In August, 1941, Faÿ had written to Stein about his wartime job: "My own life is very full and very fruitful. *I do a lot of things that are not always pleasant*, but are always interesting. . . . The Marshall is very nice to me and they say he will appoint me a minister soon" (unpublished letter at Yale, italics mine). Exactly how unpleasant these things were can now be understood.

"I am beginning to know more than I want to about this detestable man," Burns wrote from Paris. "I doubt, however, that Gertrude knew any of this. In Faÿ she probably saw only the old friend who had helped her in so many ways, including getting the confidence to make the lecture tour." Alice Toklas clearly didn't know, either. For years previous to the escape, she had worked on getting Faÿ released from prison, in much the same way that she and Stein had worked on getting the lieutenant out of the dream house in Bilignin. But the influential people (in France and America) she tried to interest in her cause wouldn't touch it. (One of these, Donald Sutherland, a professor of classics at the University of Colorado, whom Toklas approached about finding Faÿ a teaching job in America in the case of his release, wrote in a 1968 essay entitled "The Conversion of Alice B. Toklas," "I never met Bernard Faÿ, but I knew several of his friends, who, with the exception of Alice, loathed him. He appeared to have as many personal as political enemies, being possessed of a nasty tongue.") Perhaps Stein might have achieved the impossible—Toklas couldn't. Only when the Catholic Church thought it safe to intervene—Burns believes that the escape and a university appointment in Fribourg were engineered largely by the Church—was the "miracle" (as Toklas called it) worked.

In one of Toklas's letters of supplication (this one to a prominent Chicago society woman named Bobsy Goodspeed), she wrote that Stein's feeling for Faÿ made it mandatory for her to work to free him. It was "a sacred trust." In a letter of November, 1946, to Carl Van Vechten, she permitted herself this: "He has been in Fresnes prison since the liberation accused of hating communists (who doesnt) acting against the masons (who wouldnt in France) hating the English (the large majority of Frenchmen do) hating the Jews (is he alone?)." (Unknown to Toklas, when Sutherland asked Van Vechten "what I was supposed to make of Bernard Faÿ, when I thought he should have been shot outright but Alice was of an entirely different opinion," Van Vechten had replied, "I can't endure Bernard." And, unknown to Bobsy Goodspeed, Faÿ had described her to Stein, in a letter of 1934, as "a good-looking, silly-clever Evanston lady, wife of the foremost trustee and lover of the wife of the president of the University of Chicago.")

Toklas outlived Stein by twenty years and emerged from her role of shadowy companion to become a distinct character in her own right. The young men who used to make pilgrimages to Stein now made them to the acerbic, increasingly thinner and smaller Toklas. "Staying on Alone" shows her to be an excellent letter writer—which could never be said for Stein, who simply didn't bother, saving herself for her half hour of "real" writing. Near the end of her life, Toklas converted to Catholicism, egged on by Faÿ (now pardoned and back in Paris) and Mme. Azam. Ed Burns told me that Toklas's reason for converting was her notion that she could be reunited with Stein in Heaven only if she did so. "What made her think that Stein would be in Heaven?" I asked. "Because Stein was Old Testament," Burns said. "She would be there with Abraham and Moses and Elijah. She didn't have to convert."

As Stein liked to say, interesting if true.

When Eric Sevareid met Stein in Culoz in 1944, this was not his first encounter with her. He had called on her in Paris in 1937 and was, as he writes in "Not So Wild a Dream," "deeply impressed by the finest flow of talk I had ever listened to with the possible exception of that from Schnabel, the pianist." Sevareid continues:

> She has a remarkably lucid and germinal mind and disguises a profound understanding by a simplicity of rapidly flowing speech that misleads the casual listener. . . . In written form her words seem bizarre and difficult to follow, but when she herself reads them aloud it is all perfectly lucid, natural, and exact. She had just then finished her own version of *Faust*. She walked heavily up and down her study in front of her dark Picassos and read the script aloud to me, carried away by her own words and breaking off into ringing laughter which so overcame her at times that she would stop to wipe her eyes. She was a warm and wonderful person.

However, when it came to politics Sevareid thought Stein less wonderful:

> She could not think politically at all. Thus she assured me:
>
> “Hitler will never really go to war. He is not the dangerous one. You see, he is the German romanticist. He wants the illusion of victory and power, the glory and glamour of it, but he could not stand the blood and fighting involved in getting it. No, Mussolini—there’s the dangerous man, for he is an Italian realist. He won’t stop at anything.” She did not understand Fascism; she did not understand that the moods and imperatives of great mass movements are far stronger and more important than the individuals involved in them. She knew persons, but not people.

But by the time of the writing of “Wars I Have Seen” Stein seems finally to have got it. “I used not to understand but I am beginning to now,” she writes near the end of the book. She has just reported a row she had on the street with one of “the decayed aristocrats, who are always hoping that a new regime will give them a chance and they are the most furious of all against the defeat of the Germans.” A few pages earlier, she had written of “some firm reactionaries who are convinced that all maquis are terrorists, we have some charming neighbors who are like that and it worries me because after all people get angry and things might happen to them and we are very fond of them.” These “charming neighbors” must have been members of the Croix de Feu, a pernicious right-wing organization founded by veterans of the First World War, with whose views Stein had previously agreed, and among whom she has many friends in the Belley area. When, in 1937, her friend W. G. Rogers wrote to object to her position on the Spanish Civil War, she wrote back from Belley, “I interested all our French friends here who are all Croix de feu by telling them how you felt about Spain,” and went on to write page after page of reactionary piffle. But now she has corrected course. “When political issues were clarified by the eventual line-up of powers in the second World War,” Rogers writes in his memoir, “it was as plain to Miss Stein as it was to all the rest of us that there were no two ways about it, it had to be democracy, it couldn’t be totalitarianism.” Earlier in the memoir, writing of the seeds of American corn he annually sent Stein and Toklas for planting in the Bilignin garden, he notes that during the Spanish Civil War “I had told her I hoped none of my honest Loyalist corn would be served to any of her friends of the wrong political persuasion.” In “Everybody’s Autobiography,” Stein recalls the rebuke and impudently writes, “We had corn the Kiddie”—Stein’s pet name for Rogers—“who sends it to us says now we must not give it to any fascists but why not if the fascists like it, and we liked the fascists, so I said please send us unpolitical corn.” But six years later, writing to Rogers from Vichy France, Stein humbly acknowledges her error. Of the corn she is planting in her garden she now writes, “And it is allied corn you may be sure.”

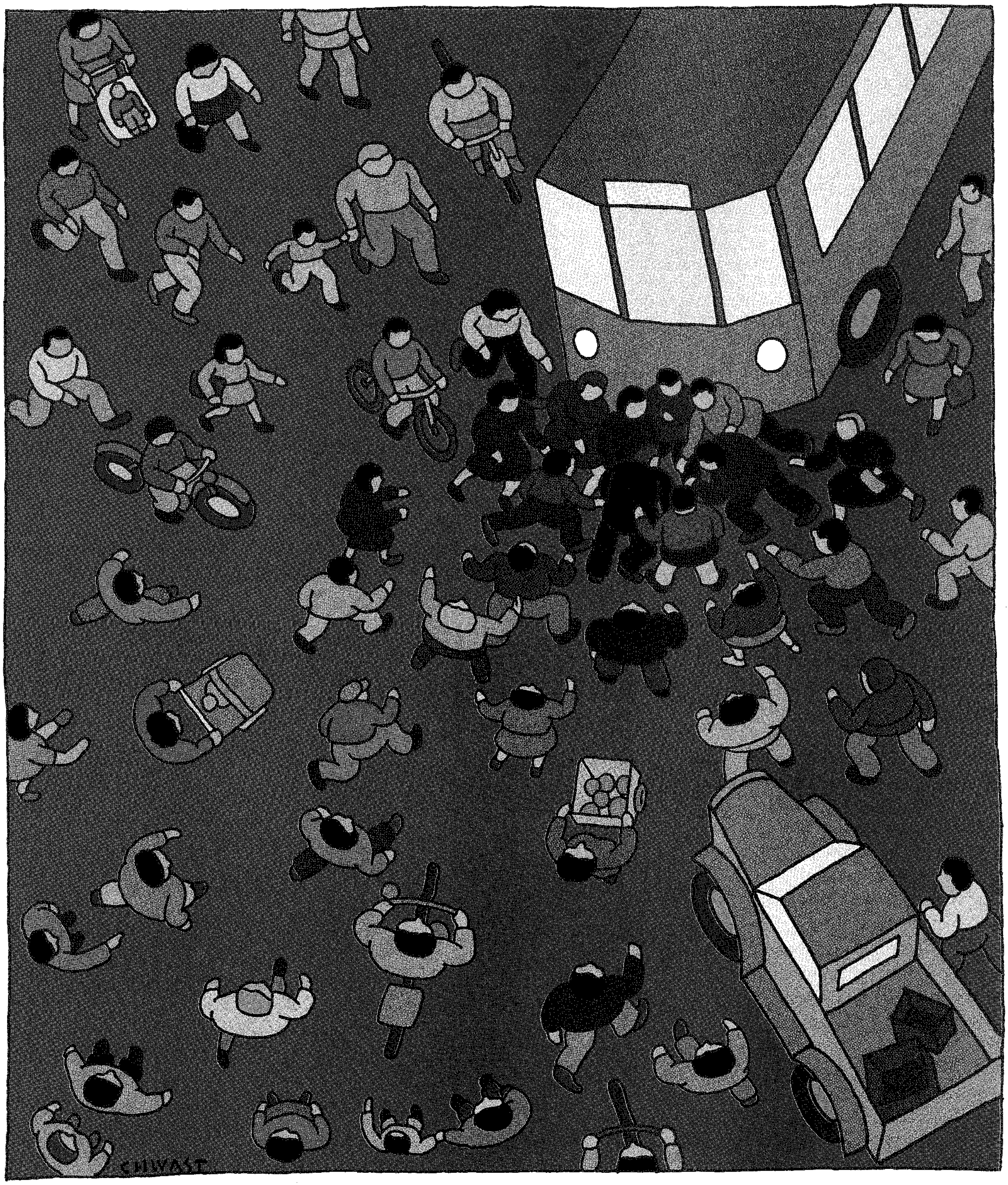
After the arrival of the Americans in Culoz, “I began to have what you might call a posthumous fear,” Stein writes in the epilogue to “Wars I Have Seen.” She reflects that during the Occupation the demands of daily life had largely kept fear at bay, but “now somehow with the American soldiers questions and hearing what had been happening to others, of course one knew it but now one had time to feel it and so I was quite frightened.” *What had been happening to others.* Again, Stein is almost but not quite saying it. Toklas never did. Although Stein sometimes referred to Toklas as “my little jew” and “my little hebrew” in the erotic poetry she wrote about her “marriage” to Toklas, Toklas herself never mentioned her (or Stein’s) Jewishness. Throughout the twenty years of her widowhood, she behaved as if it simply didn’t exist. How Stein would have situated herself in the post-Auschwitz world, had she lived, we cannot know, of course. From the evidence of her chronic contrariness, we may assume that pussy’s way would not have been her own. ♦

“On the other hand, it’s been a great year for Berlioz.”

FICTION

THE ACCIDENT

BY GAO XINGJIAN



This is how it happens.

A gust of wind sweeps up a pile of dirt from the roadwork outside Xinhua Bookshop, swirls it around in an arc above the bitumen, and then dumps it everywhere. It isn't the dust-storm season—the weather is only just starting to turn warm. Some cyclists are still wearing gray cotton overcoats, though on the sidewalks there are young women in pale-blue spring dresses. It happens at five o'clock in the afternoon, right after the fourth beep sounds on the radio in the radio-repair shop on Desheng Avenue. It isn't the hour when everyone finishes work and traffic congestion is at its worst. Inevitably, however, some people finish work early. Inevitably, too, some people aren't working at all. So there are busy and idle people coming and going, in an endless stream of cyclists and pedestrians. At this time of day it's always like this. On the buses, all the seats are taken and some passengers stand, holding on to the handrails as they look out the windows.

A man riding a bicycle that has been fitted with an extra wheel in front, for a baby carriage with a red-and-blue checkered shade, is crossing the street diagonally. Coming from the opposite direction is a two-car trolleybus that is going fast but not too fast. It is clearly moving slower than the small pale-green car that is about to overtake the bicycle, but neither is necessarily exceeding the city speed limit. The man on the bicycle arches his back, pedalling hard, as the little green car passes him on the other side. On this side, the bus is still heading toward him. The man hesitates but he doesn't brake, and the bicycle with the baby carriage continues its crossing. The bus sounds its horn but doesn't reduce its speed. By the time the man crosses the white line in the middle of the road, the dust from the gust of wind has settled, so his vision is not obscured. Unblinking, he looks up. He is about forty, not a young man, and his hat is tilted slightly backward, revealing a balding forehead. Sitting in the baby carriage under the shade is a three- or four-year-old child with rosy cheeks. The man must be able to see the bus coming toward him and to hear its horn, which is now sounding continuously. He hesitates again and seems to brake slightly, but then continues clumsily on his diagonal trajectory. As the bus gets closer and closer, its horn gets louder and louder, and then there is a piercing screech of brakes. The bicycle is still moving forward. The bus is trying to stop, but it, too, continues its ominous movement, like a wall closing in. Just as the bus and the bicycle are about to collide, a woman on the sidewalk on this side of the street starts to scream. Pedestrians and cyclists look on, but no one seems capable of moving. The front wheel of the bicycle passes the front of the bus, and the man starts pedalling harder—maybe he will just make it. At the same time, he reaches out to touch the red-and-blue checkered shade, as if he is trying to push it down. When his hand touches the shade, the carriage flies off, bouncing away on its single wheel. The man's legs are caught as he throws up his arms and falls backward off the bicycle. In the clamor of the horn, the brakes, and the woman's screams, but before onlookers have time to gasp, the man is crushed under the wheels of the bus. The bicycle he was riding is twisted and thrown ten feet away.

The pedestrians on both sides of the road are stunned, and the cyclists get off their bicycles. There is a sudden silence, the only sound a gentle song coming from the radio-repair shop:

You may remember our meeting in the mist under the broken bridge.

It is probably a record by some post-Deng Lijun Hong Kong singer. The bus's front wheels have come to a stop in a pool of blood, and blood is dripping from the bus back onto the man's body. The bus driver gets to the body first. Then people from both sides of the street come running, while others surround the overturned baby carriage, which has rolled into the gutter. A middle-aged woman takes the child out of the carriage, shakes him, and examines him all over.

"Is he dead?"

"He's dead!"

"Is he dead?"

People talk in hushed voices all around. The child's eyes are tightly shut and his soft skin is so drained of color that you can see the blue veins through it. But there is no sign of external injury.

"Don't let the driver get away!"

"Hurry, call the police!"

A crowd several layers deep has formed around the front of the bus. Only one man is inquisitive enough to lift up the twisted wreck of the bicycle. Its bell rings as he puts it back down.

"Don't touch anything! Leave everything as it is!"

"I clearly honked the horn and braked! Everyone saw it—he was trying to kill himself by riding into the bus! How can you say it's my fault?" In a strained voice, the driver tries to explain, but no one pays any attention.

"You can all be witnesses—all of you saw it!"

"Step aside! Step aside! Step aside, all of you!"

A policeman with a big hat emerges from the crowd.

"The child needs help! Quick! Stop a car and get him to a hospital!"

A young man in a coffee-colored leather jacket runs into the middle of the road, waving his arms. A small Toyota sedan toots its horn as it makes its way through the pedestrians who have spilled onto the street, but it doesn't stop. Next, a 130 light truck pulls up and comes to a halt. Inside the bus, the passengers are bickering with a woman ticket-seller. Another bus pulls up behind. The doors of the first bus open and the passengers surge out, blocking the bus that has just arrived. There is a loud burst of voices.

I will never, never be able to forget . . .

The noise drowns out the music on the radio. Blood is still dripping, and the smell of it hangs in the air.

"*Waaa* . . ." The child finally breaks into a howl.

"That's a good sign!"

"He's still alive!"

There are happy sighs of relief. As the howling grows louder, the people around the child also come to life: it is as if they have been liberated. They rush to join the crowd by the body.

Wailing sirens. A police car with flashing blue lights on its roof pulls up. Four policemen get out, and the crowd parts to make way for them. Two of them are wielding batons.

The traffic has now come to a standstill and long lines of vehicles are waiting in both directions. Honking horns rise above the din of voices. One of the policemen stations himself in the middle of the road and starts waving

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his white-gloved hands to direct traffic.

The other policemen summon the ticket-seller from the second bus. She tries to make excuses, but then reluctantly takes the child from the middle-aged woman who has been holding him and gets into the 130 light truck. A white glove signals, and the truck drives off, carrying with it the baby's shrill sobs.

A policeman is questioning the driver, who is wiping the sweat off his face with his cotton cap. He takes out his driver's license, in its red plastic holder, and the policeman confiscates it. He immediately starts to complain.

"Why are you trying to deny it? If you ran over the man, then you ran over him!" a young man pushing a bicycle says in a loud voice.

"He was trying to get himself killed. The driver was blowing the horn and braking and the man wouldn't give way. He just rode under the bus." The ticket-seller, wearing sleeve protectors, has come out of the first bus to rebuke the young man.

"The man was in the middle of the road and had a child with him. It was broad daylight. The driver must have seen him!" someone in the crowd interjects angrily. "What does it matter to drivers like him if they run someone over? It's not as if they'll have to pay for it with their own lives." This is said sarcastically.

"What a tragedy! If he hadn't had the child with him, he would have made it across in time!"

"Is there any hope for him?"

"His brain came out?"

"I just heard this *plop*—"

"You heard it?"

"Yes, it just went *plop*."

"Enough! I don't want to know!"

"Ai, that's the way life is—a person can die just like that."

"He's crying."

"Who?"

"The driver."

The driver, squatting on his haunches with his head down, covers his eyes with his cap.

"It was an accident."

"The man had a child with him? What happened to the child?" a newcomer asks.

"The child wasn't hurt. He was very lucky."

"The child was saved."

"The man is dead!"

"Was he the child's father?"

"Why did he have to hook a baby carriage to his bicycle? It's hard enough not to have an accident with a regular bicycle."

"He'd just picked up the child from nursery school."

"Nursery schools are hopeless—they won't let you leave your children there for the whole day."

"You're lucky if you can get your kid into one at all."

"What are you looking at? From now on, if you run across the road without looking—" A big hand drags away a child who is trying to squeeze between the onlookers.

The Hong Kong star has stopped singing. The front of the radio-repair shop is crowded with people.

An ambulance has arrived, its red lights flashing. Medical personnel in white uniforms carry the body to the ambulance, and the people in shop doorways stand on their toes to watch. The fat cook from a small restaurant nearby has come out in his apron to see what's going on.

"What happened? Was there an accident? Was someone hurt?"

"It was a father and son. One of them is dead."

"Which one?"

"The old man."

"What about the son?"

"Unhurt."

"That's terrible! Why didn't he pull his father out of the way?"

"It was the father who pushed the son out of the way."

"It's getting worse with every generation. The man was wasting his time on that son!"

"If you don't know what happened, then don't talk crap."

"Who's talking crap?"

"I don't want to argue with you."

"The child was taken away."

"There was a small child as well?"

Others have just arrived.

"Do you mind not shoving?"

"Did I shove you?"

"Move on. All of you move on!"

On the outer fringes of the crowd, people are being arrested. Traffic-safety personnel with red armbands are now on the scene, and they are more vicious than the police.

The driver, who is being pushed into the police car, turns and tries to struggle, but the policemen close the door. People start walking and riding away, and the crowd thins, but still more people come along, stopping their bicycles or stepping off the sidewalks and into the street. On this side of the road, a long line of cars, vans, jeeps, and limousines, led by the second bus, make their slow way past the baby carriage with the torn red-and-blue checkered shade, which is still in the gutter. Most of the crowd has dispersed.

In the middle of the road, two policemen take measurements, while another makes notes in a little book. The pool of blood under the wheels of the bus has already started to congeal and turn black. The ticket-seller sits by a window, gazing blankly at this side of the road. On the other side, another bus is approaching. Faces stare from behind the windows and some passengers even poke their heads out. Now the workday is over, and it is peak traffic time. There are even more people on the sidewalks and on bicycles. But the police and the traffic-safety personnel keep them off the road.

"Was there an accident?"

"Was someone killed?"

"Must have been—look at all that blood."

"Yesterday there was an accident on Jiankang Road. A sixteen-year-old was taken to the hospital, but they couldn't save him. They said he was an only son."

"Every family has only one son these days."

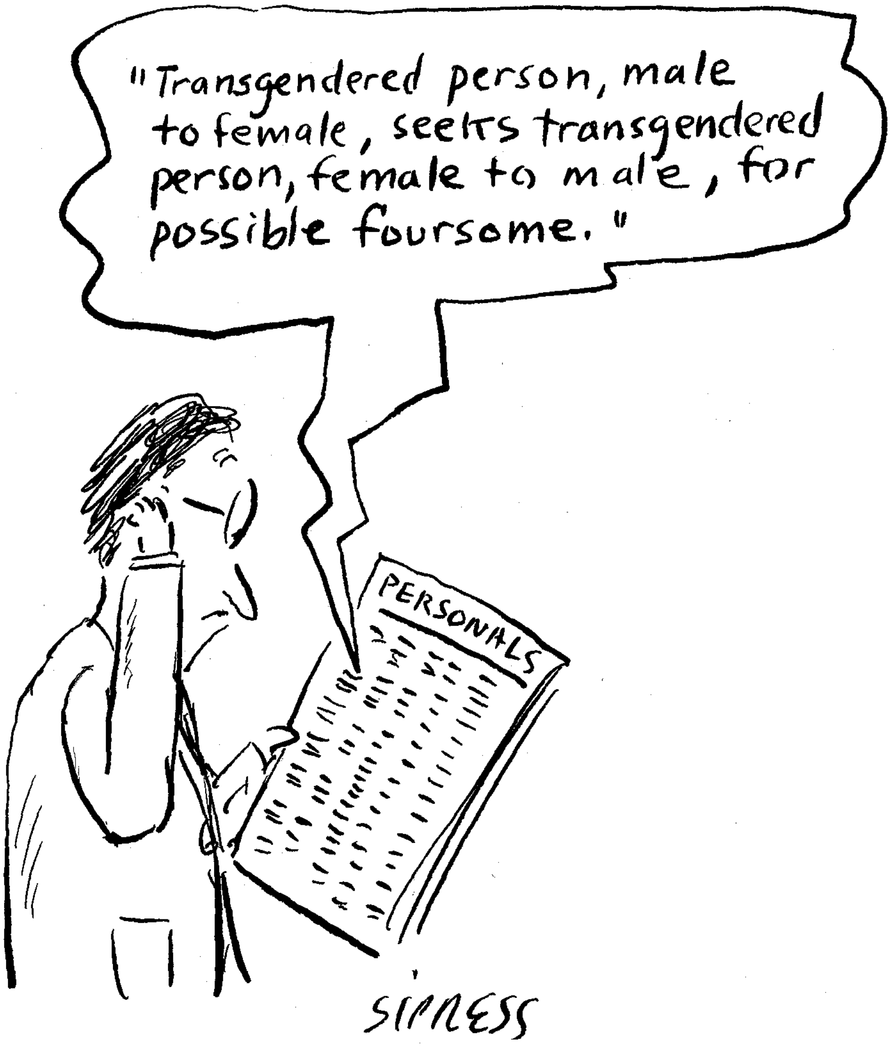
"Ai, how will the parents manage?"

"If no one does anything to improve traffic safety, there'll only be more accidents!"

"Well, there won't be fewer accidents, that's for sure."

"Every day I worry until my Jiming gets home from school."

"It's easier with your son—daughters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THE HALO THAT WOULD NOT LIGHT

When, after many years, the raptor beak
Let loose of you,

He dropped your tiny body
In the scarab-colored hollow

Of a carriage, left you like a finch
Wrapped in its nest of linens wound

With linden leaves in a child's cardboard box.

Tonight the wind is hover-

Hunting as the leather seats of swings go back
And forth with no one in them

As certain and invisible as
Red scarves silking endlessly

From a magician's hollow hat
And the spectacular catastrophe

Of your endless childhood
Is done.

—*Lucie Brock-Broido*

are more of a worry to their parents."

"Look, look! They're taking photographs."

"A lot of good that will do! It's too late."

"Did the bus hit him on purpose?"

"Who knows?"

"The carriage can't have been attached, or else it would have been hit, too."

"I was just passing by."

"Some people drive like maniacs. They're not going to stop just because you won't get out of the way!"

"There are people who take out their frustrations by killing other people. Anyone could be a victim."

"It's hard to protect yourself against that kind of thing—it's all determined by fate. In our old village, there was a carpenter who was a good craftsman, but he was very fond of drinking. Once, he was building someone a house and, coming home at night drunk out of his mind, he tripped and smashed his head on a rock."

"For some reason, my eyelid has been twitching for the past couple of days."

"Which eye?"

"You shouldn't walk down the street so lost in thought all the time. Quite a few times I've seen you—"

"Nothing's ever happened to me."

"But if something did I wouldn't be able to bear it."

"Stop it! People are staring."

The two lovers look at each other and walk off down the street, holding hands.

The police have finished photographing the scene of the accident, and the policeman with the tape measure takes a shovel of dirt and spreads it over the blood. The wind has died down, and it is getting dark. The ticket-seller sitting by the window of the bus has turned on the lights and is counting the day's take. A policeman shoulders the wrecked bicycle and carries it to the car. Two men with red armbands get the baby carriage from the gutter, put it in the car, and leave with the police.

It is time for dinner. The ticket-seller stands at the door of the bus, waiting impatiently for a new driver to be sent to pick it up. Passersby now barely glance at the empty bus that is stopped for some unknown reason in the middle of the road. In the dark, no one notices the blood, which is covered with dirt and barely visible.

At some point, the street lights come on and the empty bus is driven away. Cars speed down the road again, and it is as if nothing has happened. By midnight, the street is almost empty. A street-cleaning truck approaches from a distant intersection, where the traffic lights flash intermittently next to a blue poster on an iron railing. Printed in white are the words "FOR YOUR WELL-BEING AND THAT OF OTHERS, PLEASE OBSERVE TRAFFIC RULES." At the spot where the accident occurred, the truck slows and, with high-powered jets of water, flushes away any remaining traces of blood.

The street cleaners have no way of knowing that an accident took place here a few hours ago and that the unfortunate victim died. But who was the victim? In this city of several million people, he was likely known only to his family and his friends. And if he wasn't carrying identification papers even they may not yet know about the accident. The man was probably the child's father, and it is possible that the child will be able to tell the authorities his name. If the man was the father, he must have had a wife, too. And yet he was the one picking up the child, so he was both a good father and a good husband. Because he loved his child, presumably he also loved his wife, but did his wife love him? If she loved him, why didn't she fulfill her responsibilities as a mother and pick up the child herself?

Maybe the man had a miserable life and that's why he was so distracted. Maybe it was a flaw in his personality and he was always indecisive. Maybe something had been troubling him, something he couldn't resolve, and he was simply fated to fall victim to this even greater misfortune. However, if he had set out a little later or a little earlier, he might have avoided disaster. Or if, after picking up the child, he had pedalled faster or slower, or if he had spoken longer with the woman at the nursery school, or if, on the way, he had run into a friend and stopped to talk . . .

But it was unavoidable. He had no incurable disease, yet, all the same, he was just waiting to die. No one can escape death. And no city is free of traffic accidents. In every city there is the possibility of death—even if the chance on any given day is one in a million—and in a big city like this someone is always encountering some sort of misfortune. The dead man was one such person. Did he have a premonition before it happened? When it was happening, what did he think about? He probably didn't have time to think, to comprehend the disaster that was about to befall him. For him, there could be no greater disaster. He was that one in a million, like a grain of sand. But before dying he had clearly thought of the child. Had he nobly sacrificed himself? Or perhaps it wasn't purely noble—perhaps it was to some extent instinctive, the instinct of a father. People talk about the strength of a mother's instinct, but there are also mothers who abandon their babies. For the man to have sacrificed himself for the child was indeed noble, but in fact the sacrifice had been entirely avoidable. If he had set out a little later or a little earlier, as I've said, if he had not been preoccupied, if he were more resolute by nature, or more agile in his movements . . . The sum total of these failures had hastened his death.

Here I am, discussing philosophy, but life is not philosophy, although philosophy derives from one's knowledge of life. And there is no need for us to turn life's traffic accidents into statistics—that's a job for the traffic-safety department. Of course, a traffic accident can serve as an item in a newspaper. And it can provide the raw material for literature, when it is supplemented by the imagination and described in a moving narrative. But what I have related here is simply the accident itself, a traffic accident that occurred at five o'clock in the central section of Desheng Avenue, in front of the radio-repair shop.

—Beijing, 1983 ♦

(*Translated, from the Chinese, by Mabel Lee.*)

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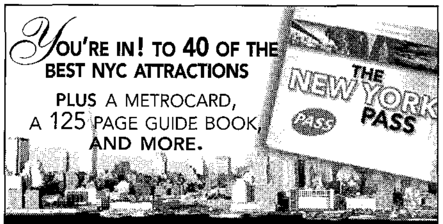

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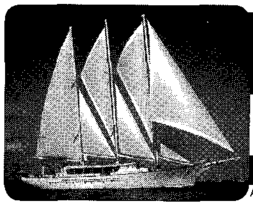

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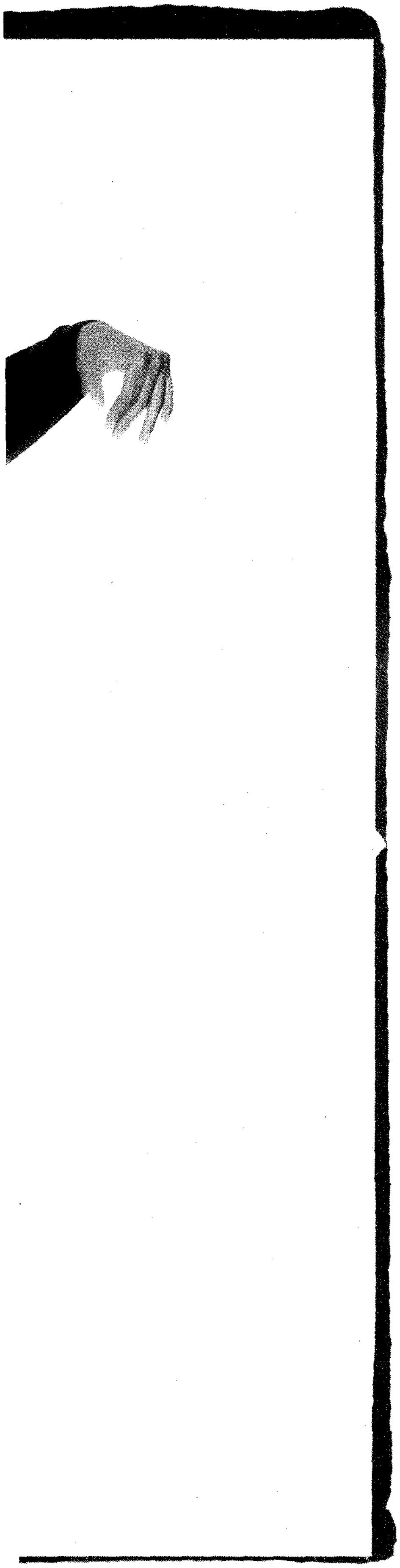
Rennie Harris would like to see hip-hop dancing extend itself, and thereby find a place in the theatre, not just on MTV or in sul



ons. Photograph by Chris Callis.

THE CRITICS

DANCING

OFF THE STREET

Rennie Harris's "Facing Mekka."

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

A few years ago, the choreographer Rennie Harris told an interviewer that it would be hard to write a history of hip-hop, because most of its innovators "are either locked up or were murdered on the streets." Many people in the hip-hop community complain that the press has overstressed the violence in their world. Meanwhile, the violence goes on. 50 Cent (Curtis Jackson), the hottest rap artist today, recently told the *Times* that he survived two attempts on his life in 1999 and 2000. Once, he was shot; the other time, he was knifed. The knifing was a small matter, he said: "My baby's mother has stabbed me worse than that." Still, he now gets around in a bulletproof truck, with two bodyguards.

Rennie Harris grew up in North Philadelphia, in the section known as the Badlands—one of seven children in a family without a father. He first started dancing in his living room, by copying the moves on "Soul Train." He had no formal lessons. "I trained at my mother's barbecues," he once said. "I trained in the streets." The streets taught him more than dance, however. He was eight when he first saw a man get shot. He was fifteen when he first fired a gun. Today, he is thirty-nine. In his early years as a dancer, he toured with Run-DMC, Fat Boys, Kurtis Blow, Whodini. In 1992, in Philadelphia, he founded his own company, Rennie Harris Puremovement, with the goal of bringing hip-hop dance to the concert stage. Along the way, violence has dogged his steps, and his choreography was soon informed by horror over that. The piece for which he first gained wide recognition, a hair-raising 1992 solo called "Endangered Species," showed him fleeing unseen assailants. Two years later, while jogging by the side of the Schuylkill River, he came upon a dead body floating in the water; he eventually made a piece about that, too.

Harris is not only unhappy about people dying. His concerns are also artistic. In the classic, b-boy form of hip-hop dancing—with the dipping walk, the popping and locking, the spins on the shoulder and head—what we get is solo work, usually by young males, usually in competition. It is a brief act of physical heroism, with a note of defiance. Harris clearly loves the form, and he has become a spokesman for it. (At last year's Planet Hip Hop festival, at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, he was the one who organized and directed the amazing "Hip Hop Legends" showcase.) But he also worries about its narrowness: its limitation of emotion to pride and swagger, its monopoly by males, its spurting, explosive, twenty-seconds-of-wildness quality. This doesn't just remind him of the streets; it reminds him of light entertainment—an "act," short and showy, perfect, say, for the music videos in which, for the past two decades, underpaid b-boys (including Harris) have rotated on their clavicles behind the singers. He would like to see hip-hop dancing extend itself, become broader and deeper, and thereby find a place in the *theatre*, not just on MTV (or in the Times Square subway station). His 2000 "Rome & Jewels," an adaptation of "Romeo and Juliet," was his first move in that direction.

"Rome & Jewels" took nothing away from hip-hop. The full panoply was there: the spoken word (in this case, a melding of Shakespeare's text with street talk); three nimble d.j.s scratching like crazy; two street gangs, the Caps (Capulets) doing b-boy moves, the Monster Q's (Montagues) doing African-based ensemble dances. At the same time, with Shakespeare behind him, Harris built on that foundation. To my knowledge, "Rome & Jewels" was the first full-evening narrative dance produced by the hip-hop world. And it took on states of mind previously remote from hip-hop, notably love and grief.

It carried them only so far, however. Just as "Romeo and Juliet" was part of Shakespeare's early period, so, in a way, was "Rome & Jewels" a product of Harris's. He couldn't really break with the subject of violence, and Shakespeare's play, in which love is defeated by gang warfare, supported him in that hesitation. (As, no doubt, did the fact that one of the members of his cast was murdered before the première.) In "Romeo and Juliet," young men sparred with swords; in "Rome & Jewels," they fought by dancing. In between, Harris gave us a love story, but one severely limited by the fact that the heroine, Jewels, was invisible throughout. (In the bedroom scene, Rome did a slow-motion love dance by himself.) In an interview prior to the New York première, Harris defended his omission of the woman, on the ground that this was true to street psychology. "Rome & Jewels," he said, was "about men's bullshit—who they think they are and how they conjure women into what they want them to be"; that is, not human beings but projections, status symbols. (Hence Jewels's name.) Actually, when Harris started work on the piece, he did have a dancer in the role of Jewels; he eventually dropped her. I think he didn't know what to do with her. But he certainly knew what to do with the "men's bullshit." "Rome & Jewels" may have been an attempt at making hip-hop more complicated, but the spine of the production, and the thing that the audience cheered for, was the gang warfare, which consisted of regular (if superlatively performed) hip-hop—young men showing you everything they had and then dying, as they do in North Philadelphia.

Was this a message? Hip-hop dancing may be young, but it is only a latter-day entry into an ancient art, the art of male self-assertion—dick-waving, basically—which is as old as the Iliad and has a lengthy pedigree in African song and dance as well. That art may be connected to things we don't like, such as war, but it also involves things we do like. When Mercutio goes up against Tybalt, and the Monster Q's against the Caps—or when rap m.c.s, in their "battles," insult each other in rhythm and rhyme—what we are seeing is not just testosterone but courage, wit, zest, resourcefulness, together with a certain existential dignity. So maybe, in "Rome & Jewels," the trumping of emotional complexity by classic hip-hop show-'em-what-you-got was the right choice? Maybe you can't, or shouldn't, take the swagger out of hip-hop?

Perhaps not, but Harris, in his newest piece, "Facing Mekka," which had its New York première earlier this month, at the Joyce (it will be shown at Jacob's Pillow in July), has tried again, and this time he has gone further. He has deleted some of the hip-hop appurtenances—the spoken word, all but one d.j. In their place is an onstage band, with a global reach: *berimbau* (Afro-Brazilian), conga drums (Afro-Cuban), tabla (Indian), cello. The dancing, too, is eclectic, incorporating moves from Brazilian *capoeira* and Japanese *butoh*. On the backdrop there's video—a tumultuous collage (by Tobin Rothlein) in which, at various times, I could make out National Guardsmen and Martin Luther King and burning crosses. Even without those images, though, it is clear that "Facing Mekka" is about more than the street. Its subject, I think, is African-American memory.

To that end, Harris's most important innovation is that half the cast is female. With their light feet and waving hips, the women supply a note of lyricism—a remembered calm and sweetness—to counteract the grim videos. But the girls aren't just nice. The most thrilling section of the whole piece is a suffering solo for a woman, Tania Isaac, in which Harris has at last achieved his goal of deepening hip-hop. In it, the b-boy dives became falls; the isolations, brokenness; the swagger, a sheer refusal to die. This was a horrifying dance, and I could have watched it forever.

Starting around the middle of its ninety minutes, "Facing Mekka" broke down into solos, but, apart from a rather lame inspirational song for the cellist-vocalist Grisha Coleman, they were very good, and all part of one story. There was an unforgettable routine by Kenny Muhammad, a.k.a. the Human Orchestra, in which he did his famous "beat-boxing," a rhythmically expert explosion of mouth sounds—clicks, smacks, gulps, honks—into a souped-up mike. (This is presumably a descendant of African mouth-singing, and perhaps of scat as well.) Then Isaac did her act. At the end, Harris came out alone and performed a dance crossing hip-hop locking with the catatonics of *butoh*, which, on his body (he's six feet two, a hundred and ninety pounds, with mile-long dreads), made for quite a show. This is the dance that was based on Harris's finding the corpse in the Schuylkill. It got most of its power from the same means as the solo he made for Isaac: a mere slowing down of hip-hop. But when robotics are slowed down they look like electrocution. In the score, meantime, we got scratching and gunshot; on the video, a house on fire. The whole thing looked like a nightmare, or a psychotic episode, and good for Harris that he didn't end on the usual we-will-overcome note.

Again and again, when black artists adapt street work to the stage, the critics say it's terrific. When it's framed as black history, it's more than terrific. Remember "Bring in 'Da Noise, Bring in 'Da Funk," which was conceived and directed by George C. Wolfe, and choreographed by Savion Glover. Everyone said it was fabulous. It wasn't. Glover's choreography was fabulous, the more so for hanging on by its fingernails to the show's shallow, accusatory libretto. In "Facing Mekka" the moral vision is broader, and, despite the videos, the means are largely abstract: music, dance. This makes it encompassing—a story not just of African-American memory but of memory itself. Shortly before the première, Harris told the *Times* that to him "Mekka" meant "self or dance." Self or dance? That's everything he has. And that's what the piece looks like. ♦

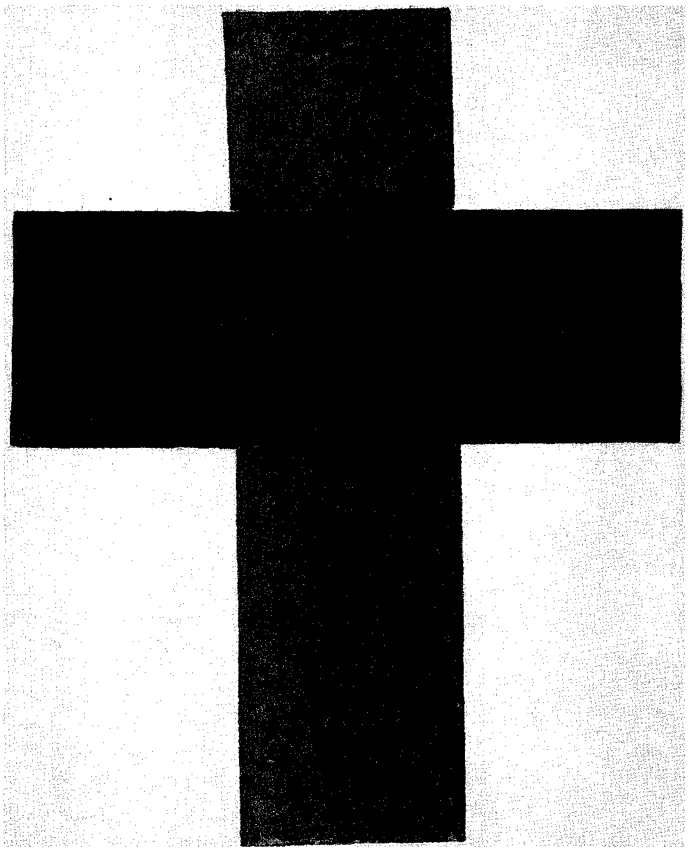
THE ART WORLD

THE PROPHET

Malevich's revolution.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

In 1915, in Moscow, Kazimir Malevich painted a black square against a white ground on a canvas about two and a half feet square and called it a work of Suprematism. It was an extreme act of art and philosophy that has stayed extreme. "Black Square" makes its first appearance outside Russia in "Kazimir Malevich: Suprematism," a concise, bewitching show at the Guggenheim. The painting looks terrible: crackled, scuffed, and discolored, as if it had spent the past eighty-eight years patching a broken window. In fact, it passed most of that time deep in the Soviet archives, classed among the lowliest of the state's treasures. Malevich, like other members of the Revolutionary-era Russian avant-garde, was thrown into oblivion under Stalin. The axe fell on him in 1930. Accused of "formalism," he was interrogated and jailed for two months. He had been trying, in vain, to regain official favor with pictures of mildly abstracted figures. When he died, at the age of fifty-seven, in Leningrad in 1935, his friends and disciples buried his ashes in a grave marked with a black square. They didn't fulfill his stated wish to have the grave topped with an "architekton"—one of his skyscraper-like maquettes of abstract forms, equipped with a telescope through which visitors were to gaze at Jupiter.



"Suprematism (Hieratic Suprematist Cross)," 1920-21.

STEDELIJK MUSEUM/COURTESY GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

The generation of Russian artists, designers, poets, and thinkers who caught fire just before the First World War, rose to institutional privilege under the 1917 Revolution, and then were crushed is characterized by grandiosity and grandeur—and tragedy, in abundance. "When the mode of the music changes, the walls of the city shake," Plato wrote. Artists who transformed all given modes of visual art while the walls of Russia more than shook could hardly avoid hubris. They had an unfortunate habit of scheming against one another, as well as against any artists whom they deemed outmoded. Realist painters stored up resentments for a day of vengeance. When the day came, Malevich proved luckier in his posterity than such colleagues as his arch-rival Vladimir Tatlin, the crack artist-engineer who had opposed Suprematism with what briefly seemed the politically impeccable doctrines of Constructivism. The Constructivists rejected pictorial composition in favor of machinelike structure, and dedicated their art to socially useful purposes. Most of Tatlin's work disappeared from the world's view. The fluke of a retrospective in Warsaw and Berlin in 1927 left nearly seventy works by Malevich in the West—among them the Museum of Modern Art's talismanic "White on White" (1918), a cool white square on a warm white ground. Malevich's work is a modern touchstone. But there remains something incomprehensibly bizarre about his achievement and his personality, as if he hailed, indeed, from Jupiter.

Malevich was born in 1878 to Polish-speaking parents in Ukraine. (His father worked as an administrator in sugar refineries.) He received an art education in Kiev, moved to Moscow in his late teens, and was soon active in avant-garde circles, including the Moscow Art Theatre. He became known for Cubist paintings on themes of Russian folk culture. In 1913, he designed sets and costumes for a legendary "Cubo-Futurist" opera, "Victory Over the Sun." (I once saw a conjectural re-staging of that work in Los Angeles; it was noisy and perfectly opaque.) Such was his personal charisma that he attracted many talented followers, who carried Suprematist motifs into decorative, functional, and architectural specialties. By 1919, he had established a power base at the art school in Vitebsk, where his faction had rudely ousted Marc Chagall from the directorship. (Chagall envisioned a school that was open to all tendencies; the new order would have none of that.) Malevich's most important ally, El Lissitzky, transposed Suprematism into a jazzy, superficial formal repertoire. Travelling often to Western Europe, Lissitzky helped to popularize the new Russian aesthetics under the general rubric Constructivism, producing a lasting confusion about an avant-garde whose dynamism was inseparable from its profound philosophical disagreements.

At the Guggenheim, thirty-eight paintings and many drawings and archi-

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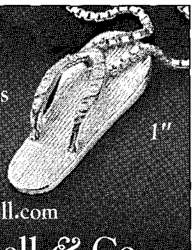

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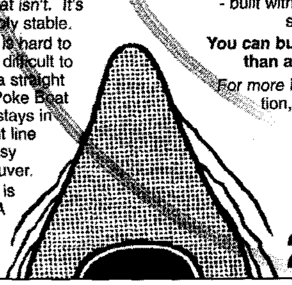

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tektons track the flowering of Suprematism from 1915 into the early nineteen-twenties. The first works consist of single shapes—square, circle, cross, rectangle—in black and white. Then come those same shapes in various combinations and colors, with such impudent titles as "Painterly Realism: Boy with Knapsack—Color Masses in the Fourth Dimension" (a black square and a smaller, tilted red one). Thereafter, assorted quadrilaterals, triangles, disks, and lines gang up, balletically, in white non-space. Some works recall Kandinsky, but without Kandinsky's vaporous air of fantasy. Malevich's paintings, even when complex, are joltingly direct. Some are in better physical condition than others. (The Stedelijk Museum, in Amsterdam, has taken wonderful care of its Maleviches, which look brand new.) All are most peculiar objects: brusquely handmade incarnations of a cerebral realm in which the laws of physics fall away. Malevich insisted that he painted in four and, later, five dimensions. Having consulted his own arcane writings on the fifth dimension, which he termed "economy," I conclude that we're not meant to understand. Although he constantly invoked the authority of science for his experiments, he was religious, and even mystical, in temperament. When his art clicks, it's with a shudder of the sublime.

Visible brushstrokes in the paintings fascinate: whistle-while-you-work, perfunctory filling-in that goes carefully fussy at the edges of shapes. There's an ineffable sweetness to the artist's hasty, human touch that consorts piquantly with the radical headiness of his program. Opposing qualities of hand and brain generate a tension that distinguishes Malevich from his Western counterpart, Piet Mondrian. The Dutch artist mostly suppressed the marks of his brush and took infinite pains to make his designs readable in terms of gravity and bodily balance. He never stopped being a landscape painter at heart. Malevich's weightless formal relationships would make kinesthetic sense only in outer space. I like to imagine those paintings in their original context, holding forth on the walls of dingy, cluttered rooms. (Installation photographs of the time help.) Nothing else in the world looked like them. Malevich hatched Suprematism secretly in 1915, to prevent anyone from stealing a march on him. One day, the artist Ivan Puni unexpectedly walked into the studio, and Malevich felt that he had to go public with his innovations immediately. He needn't have fretted. Innumerable painters have produced similar works since then. None have attained his punch.

Alone in his generation, Malevich looked both backward and forward in the history of art. He acknowledged having been inspired by the numinous compactness of Russian Orthodox icons. (When "Black Square" was first shown, it was hung in the angle of two walls, as icons often are.) Beyond that, his abstractions amount to piecemeal analyses of devices that are fundamental to Western painting, such as spatial recession in two beautiful works from 1917 and 1918, in which colored planes appear to dissolve backward into white mist. A lingering conservatism is apparent in the title of "Four Squares," a painting from 1915, which is quartered into equal black and white segments, checkerboard fashion. Shouldn't that be "Five Squares," the fifth one being the painting itself? Malevich's apparent unconsciousness of this fact indicates that he clung to the convention of the canvas as a window on a fictive reality. His paintings remain pictures. But even now they feel pregnant with creative possibilities, approaching nothingness not as an end but as a pivot for renewal. "It is from zero, in zero, that the true movement of being begins," he wrote.

By 1920, under relentless pressure from the accelerating radicalism of the avant-garde, Malevich succumbed to the view that, as he said, "painting was done for long ago, and the artist himself is a prejudice of the past." (Around that time, Tatlin's follower Aleksandr Rodchenko painted three canvases monochrome red, yellow, and blue; he declared them the "last paintings.") Malevich continued to paint, but began dutifully to give himself over to socially virtuous architectural research, fabric and dress design, and, rather touchingly, Suprematist teacups. It was a painful development, as was the artist's dismal return to representational imagery. The Revolution was dining on its children, just slowly enough to make them, in desperation, compromise their principles one by one. ◆

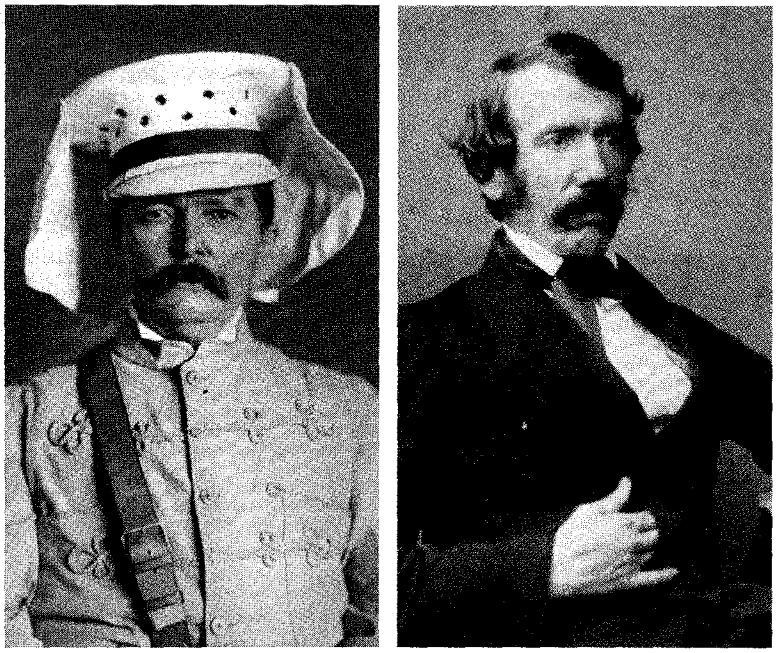
BOOKS

LOST AND FOUND

Exploring the legacy of Stanley and Livingstone.

BY ADAM HOCHSCHILD

Few historical figures see their stock rise and fall as dramatically as do explorers. Poor Columbus, formerly revered for discovering the New World, now has Native American protests on the holiday named after him. Robert Falcon Scott, once widely admired for reaching the South Pole, is these days more often seen as a bumbler who started off too late in the season, brought too little food, and, refusing to use dogs to haul his sleds the final half of his journey, led himself and four exhausted colleagues to a frozen end. His famous last letters about dying for king and country now seem an eerie preview of the needless deaths of the First World War.



Where Stanley promoted colonialism, Livingstone was a muted opponent of it.

GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE

The most celebrated explorers of the nineteenth century were Dr. David Livingstone and Sir Henry Morton Stanley. Livingstone was the first European to cross Africa. He found the great cataract he named Victoria Falls, survived dozens of bouts with tropical diseases, and one mauling by a lion. A physician and a missionary, he also crusaded against the slave trade between the east coast of Africa and the Islamic world. Physically brave, morally righteous, man of God and man of science, Livingstone was the perfect hero for Britons who, newly aware of the riches of Africa, wanted to believe that their interest was wholly altruistic.

In 1866, Livingstone set off on a new expedition, one of whose aims was to find the source of the Nile, which had been an age-old European obsession. When he hadn't been heard from for many months, the enterprising publisher of the New York *Herald*, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., sent Stanley, his star reporter, in pursuit. After a long and harrowing journey, Stanley was finally able to utter his famous "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" The two men hit it off and began to explore together; they travelled by boat around the northern end of Lake Tanganyika hoping to find the Nile flowing out but, to their disappointment, found only another river flowing in. Nearby, they came upon and christened the New York Herald Islands. Stanley then returned to Europe with the journalistic scoop of the century.

Stanley became a promoter of colonialism and the most successful travel writer of modern times. He made several more African expeditions, most notably a thousand-day trek across the continent, from 1874 to 1877, which, for the first time, determined the course of the Congo River and led to the colonization of its enormous watershed. He was the right hero for a later, more aggressive phase of the great African land grab, when Europeans were grateful to be told that they were doing a good thing in civilizing the African barbarians, by force if necessary. It is no accident that so many of Stanley's books have "dark" in the title: "In Darkest Africa," "Through the Dark Continent," "My Dark Companions and Their Strange Stories."

Livingstone died in Africa, in 1873, after braving more illness, plodding farther, and sometimes finding himself neck-deep in swampy water that was not, alas, the Nile. When his body was brought back to England, it was greeted at Southampton by a twenty-one-gun salute and a special train to convey it to London. About two decades later, at the time of Stanley's wedding in Westminster Abbey, Queen Victoria sent the bride a locket with thirty-eight diamonds. Presidents, kings, and generals were eager to meet him, and, when he triumphantly toured the United States and Canada on the lecture circuit, it was in a private railway car named the Henry M. Stanley.

There are more than a hundred biographies of Livingstone alone, and a 1976 bibliography of works having to do with the two explorers lists 1,766 titles, including "Stanley und Livingstone," "Stanley et Livingstone," and "Stanley y Livingstone." An international cataract of words and images still pours forth: TV documentaries, special museum exhibits, a recent Swedish novel in the voice of one of Stanley's followers. Last year, Christie's sold a collection of Stanley memorabilia, including his Winchester rifle and a water-stained map, for more than a million dollars. Despite the continuing public fascination with the two men, however, the way people look at them has changed sharply. The nineteen-sixties, a time of major cultural and political upheavals in the United States and Europe and of the coming of independence in most of Africa, were the Continental Divide of revisionism. Few heroes survived intact, particularly if they were white men in sun helmets trekking through the bush.

Stanley has fared especially badly. He was driven to his extraordinary feats of exploration by intense shame about his origins, as an out-of-wedlock child, named John Rowlands, who grew up mostly in a Welsh poorhouse. For a long time, he passed himself off as American-born: Mark Twain even sent congratulations to his "fellow Missourian" on finding Livingstone. Then, as the secret of his early years leaked out, he spun further fictions about his life. Most conveniently, the other white men on his first two great expeditions all died along the way, cared for by their benevolent leader to the end, in Stanley's telling. "I sprang to him—only in time, however, to see him take his last gasp," he says of one. In the past few decades, critical biographers have begun to pull his story apart, principally Richard Hall in 1974, John Bierman in 1990, and Frank McLynn, in two volumes published in 1989 and 1991.

Among much else, writers examined various claims that Stanley made about his youth. According to his "Autobiography," the teen-age immigrant was taken in, adopted, and given a job by a kindly New Orleans cotton merchant named Henry Stanley and his wife. In 1859, Mrs. Stanley died tragically, of yellow fever, but not before saying, "Be a good boy. God bless you!" Soon afterward, her widower embraced his adopted son and told him that "in future *you are to bear my name.*" The two became constant companions, reading aloud to each other, discussing the Bible, travelling on Mississippi riverboats. Then, sadly, in 1861, this generous adoptive father followed his wife to Heaven. Records show, however, that the elder Stanleys lived until 1878, and that their adopted children were both girls. The future explorer stayed not in their home but, according to city directories, in various boarding houses. Much of Stanley's "Autobiography" turns out to be a similar tissue of wishful thinking.

Today, it is also hard to look at Stanley without noticing his brutality. Even in his own books, beneath the adventuring and the details about towering jungle trees and wild animals, there is a steady drumbeat of recalcitrant porters being flogged and insolent natives being taught a lesson with bullets. When Hiram Maxim gave Stanley the latest model of his machine gun to take along on an expedition, Stan-

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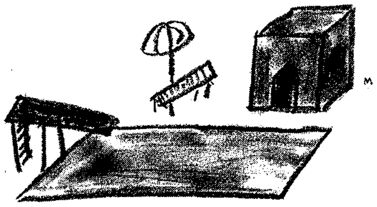
BRIEFLY NOTED

Moneyball, *by Michael Lewis (Norton; $24.95).* The Oakland Athletics have reached the post-season playoffs three years in a row, even though they spend just one dollar for every three that the New York Yankees spend. Their secret, as Lewis's lively account demonstrates, is not on the field but in the front office, in the shape of the general manager, Billy Beane. Unable to afford the star hires of his big-spending rivals, Beane disdains the received wisdom about what makes a player valuable, and has a passion for neglected statistics that reveal how runs are really scored. Beane's ideas are beginning to attract disciples, most notably at the Boston Red Sox, who nearly lured him away from Oakland over the winter. At the last moment, Beane's loyalty got the better of him; besides, moving to a team with a much larger payroll would have diminished the challenge.

The Memory of All That, *by Betsy Blair (Knopf; $25).* A rarity among showbiz memoirs, Blair's story is an anatomy of happiness, written with both a sense of the world and a sense of style. Her buoyant voice perfectly matches the brightness of her life—from the pep of Broadway, where she danced and acted in the late thirties and early forties, to the heyday of the musical in Hollywood, where she had followed her husband, Gene Kelly. Blair provides memorable glimpses of such acquaintances as Charlie Chaplin, Orson Welles, and Leonard Bernstein, and captures the era's atmosphere of expectation and innocence. Blair, who put motherhood ahead of her acting career, nonetheless received a best-actress Oscar nomination for her role in "Marty"—a role she almost lost because of her left-wing sympathies. The upheavals of the blacklist and her own maturing heart finally led her to break with Kelly and to find a new artistic and emotional life in Europe, where for forty years she was married to the late British film director Karel Reisz.

The Other Side of Silence, *by André Brink (Harcourt; $25).* The fifteenth novel by a prize-winning South African author takes as its point of departure a German program at the turn of the twentieth century whereby women were shipped out to Germany's colonies in South-West Africa (now Namibia) to be wives—or, failing that, sexual fodder—for the colonizers. Brink's protagonist, Hanna X., an abused orphan from Bremen, is eager for the imagined romance of the desert, but life in the colonies turns out to be even worse than what she has known before. After she is raped and disfigured by a German officer, Hanna turns to murder, assembling a "sad menagerie" of other downtrodden people in a crusade of vigilante vengeance. Brink's powerful and brutal story is an effective response to those who suspected that the end of apartheid would leave him without a subject, and a shrewd meditation on the dehumanizing power of hatred.

John Paul Jones, *by Evan Thomas (Simon & Schuster; $26.95).* The father of the American Navy proves to be an elusive character—both at sea, where he consistently outmaneuvered British men-of-war, and in scholarship, where the legend of his life has overwhelmed the facts. The Jones revered today is, as Thomas explains, largely the creation of Theodore Roosevelt, who wanted a role model for the Navy's officer corps. In this reappraisal, Thomas presents the Scottish-born captain as a first-class entrepreneur of war but doesn't obscure the haphazard way in which Jones's naval victories unfolded, the constant wheedling for position that alienated his patrons, or his sexual escapades. The complex portrait is rendered with nautical precision—the author knows his topsail from his topgallant—and a lively eye for such details as the Enlightenment virtues espoused by Freemasonry or the proper way to kiss a French lady in the eighteenth century (on the neck, so as not to disturb her makeup).



ley said that the invention would be "of valuable service in helping civilisation to overcome barbarism."

David Livingstone has had a more ambiguous revisiting by modern writers, beginning with a judicious 1973 biography by Tim Jeal. As with Stanley, Livingstone's biographers have exposed embarrassing personal details that Victorian mythmakers ignored. The explorer got on well with Africans but was haughty and cruelly insensitive to white fellow-travellers, to the point of having a fist-fight with his own brother. He dragged his pregnant wife and his children along on one expedition across the Kalahari Desert, which left the children horrendously sick, Mrs. Livingstone partially paralyzed for a few months, and the new baby dead. Afterward, he sent his family to England with no money to live on. His wife became an alcoholic; he saw little of his children, and his estranged oldest son changed his last name.

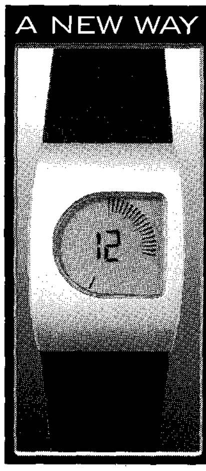
Stanley himself had been an early burnisher of Livingstone's image, thereby indirectly adding lustre to his own. In the newspaper dispatches and the book he wrote about finding Livingstone, he portrayed a saintly man. The editors of Livingstone's posthumously published final journals further polished the picture. They changed wording, removed ill-spirited jabs at Prince Albert and many others, and censored Livingstone's observations on African sexuality. ("Testicles" became "tenderest parts.") The fact that Livingstone was found dead in a kneeling position meant, of course, that the good doctor had risen from his deathbed to pray to God "to break down the oppression and woe of the land."

Another aspect of Livingstone revisionism, however, makes him a deeper and braver man than his legend. Despite his Victorian faith in the magic of free trade and his paternalism toward Africans, he took their side—in a manner that his contemporary admirers ignored—in the struggle with white settlers over land. In an article that a British magazine refused to publish, he wrote, "No nation ever secured its liberty without fighting for it," and said that the fight for freedom by the Xhosa people of southern Africa was morally similar to the 1848 uprising of the Hungarians under Kossuth: "England . . . has been struggling to crush a nation fighting as bravely for nationality as ever Magyar did." Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's former President, calls him "the first freedom fighter," and a major Zambian town is still known as Livingstone. Stanleyville, in the Congo, was long ago renamed.

Movies about the two explorers reflect their changing reputations as well. In a 1939 film, "Stanley and Livingstone," Stanley is given a comic Wild West sidekick. When their caravan gets attacked by Africans with bows and arrows, he tells Stanley, "Don't stand there in the open! This is Injun fightin'!" A kindly Livingstone, played by Cedric Hardwicke, says nothing against colonialism or in favor of African land rights and, instead, cures sick children and leads blacks in singing a rousing "Onward Christian Soldiers." Spencer Tracy, as Stanley, has only enough flaws so that he can be transformed by his contact with the gentle doctor. When Stanley finds an African named Bongo trying to steal a pocket mirror from his baggage, he knocks him down. Livingstone reproaches him, saying, "You should never strike one of these simple people." As Stanley leaves, some weeks later, he gives Livingstone the mirror for Bongo.

By contrast, a 1997 TV film, "Forbidden Territory," tells the story in harsher tones. "If I succeed, it will prove I am somebody," Stanley says at the beginning. Once on the march, he is shown as a brute who screams at the white members of his caravan, whips the black ones, and, at one point, punches an African woman. In modern, confessional style, Livingstone reveals his self-doubt and admits that he wasn't a good father. Stanley tells him, "My whole life has been a lie," and, when they part, tearfully says, "You have been like the father I never knew."

The changing images of Stanley and Livingstone over the years offer as rich a terrain for a writer as do the two men themselves. But anyone who expects to see this promising territory explored in the newest book on the subject, Martin Dugard's "Into Africa: The Epic Adventures of Stanley and Livingstone" (Doubleday; $24.95), will be disappointed. This pedestrian rehash of the story reads almost like one of the Victorian hagiographies. Even its form, with alternating sections about the two men on their separate travels until they meet and the jour-



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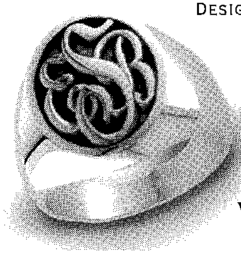

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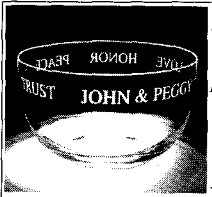

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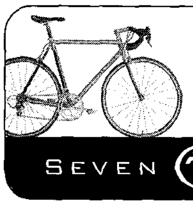

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SEVEN CYCLES

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Dugard's prose, not unlike Stanley's, sometimes has a melodramatic ring: "Character is built through trials and turmoil"; "He would learn for certain whether the explorer was dead or alive. . . . He could not stomach the maudlin limbo of doubt"; "What would happen in the next few minutes would alter the future of exploration, Africa, and the world"; "The call to adventure is genetic in a handful of men and women"; Stanley's travels took him to "the entrance to Africa's beating heart." More nettlesome yet, the book is sprinkled with factual errors. It was not King Leopold IV of Belgium for whom Stanley staked out a Congo colony but Leopold II; and it was not the Belgian Congo that first came into being as a result but the Congo Free State. The allegation that Livingstone fathered an illegitimate African child is by no means a "documented" fact; it is vigorously disputed by his biographer Jeal and other writers. Tanganyika became independent in 1961, not 1964. Britain's population in the eighteen-fifties was not four million but, counting Ireland, more than twenty-seven million.

There is a broader pattern of unreliability in Dugard's book as well. Almost always, he accepts Stanley's account of an event at face value. Stanley, who invariably portrayed himself in flattering terms, making exactly the right response in any dialogue or action, must always be treated with caution. Should we, for example, believe him when he tells how he quelled a mutiny of his porters, first facing down one armed man who came toward him, then whirling around, like a hero in a kung-fu movie, to defy another, who was about to fire on him from the other side? Dugard does.

Or take another episode. In the introduction to "How I Found Livingstone," the first of his many lively, self-promoting best-sellers, Stanley writes, "A journalist in my position . . . like a gladiator in the arena . . . must be prepared for the combat. Any flinching, any cowardice, and he is lost. The gladiator meets the sword that is sharpened for his bosom—the flying journalist or roving correspondent meets the command that may send him to his doom." He tells a dramatic tale of how he was summoned to Paris by his employer, James Gordon Bennett, Jr. He found Bennett in his hotel room at night:

> "What!" said I, "do you really think I can find Dr. Livingstone? Do you mean me to go to Central Africa?"
>
> "Yes; I mean that you shall go, and find him wherever you may hear that he is. . . . The old man may be in want:—take enough with you to help him should he require it. Of course you will act according to your own plans, and do what you think best—BUT FIND LIVINGSTONE!"

Only slightly altering the punctuation, Dugard reproduces this dialogue and takes it as fact. But, according to Stanley's most careful biographers, Bierman and McLynn, it is doubtful that anything resembling the conversation took place. Records show that Stanley arrived in Paris some ten days later than he said he did. Eight days' worth of pages from his diary around this time have been torn out. The idea of pursuing Livingstone seems to have come from another official at the New York *Herald.* Furthermore, Bennett may have lost interest and forgotten about the whole project, for when Stanley arrived in Zanzibar, the jumping-off point for his expedition, he found that Bennett had failed to send promised money for supplies. (Dugard notes that the money wasn't there, but he does not ask why.) Stanley, though, had every reason to inflate his own role as a "gladiator" and Bennett's as an editorial genius, because when he published his book, which is dedicated to Bennett, he was still on the *Herald's* payroll and wanted the paper to finance his next expedition to Africa.

That journey became Stanley's greatest feat of exploration, providing the first European look at the greater part of the Congo River and its tributaries. Subsequently, he spent five years travelling up and down the river, bamboozling illiterate African chiefs into signing their land over to King Leopold II. This laid the foundation for the King's privately owned Congo Free State, a forced-labor regime that represented the bloodiest single episode in the scramble for Africa; it has been estimated that, during Leopold's rule and its immediate aftermath, the territory's population was cut in half.

Stanley returned to central Africa one last time, between 1887 and 1890. Curiously, like the famous journey that began his exploring career, this final trip was a quest for a missing white physician. In this case, it was an eccentric German Jew who followed Islamic customs, became known as Emin Pasha, and was appointed governor of the southern province of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. He was also putting together a collection of stuffed birds for the British Museum. Emin Pasha had sent word that he was under siege from extremist Islamic rebels and needed help. Embarrassingly, however, it turned out that, by the time Stanley and his bedraggled vanguard finally reached Emin Pasha, he was no longer eager to be rescued. "For him everything depends on whether he is able to take me along, for only then . . . would his expedition be regarded as totally successful," the governor groused in his diary. Stanley wrote another best-seller about the trip, but this time books and journals by his white subordinates also appeared. They painted a grim picture: of Stanley exploding in temper tantrums, having a deserter hanged, working porters to death, ordering floggings left and right and administering some himself. When he felt that the expedition might be attacked, one officer wrote, "Stanley gave the order to burn all the villages round." At the height of the imperial age, though, the revelations about Stanley's brutality did little to tarnish his fame.

Dugard lists all the major recent books on Stanley and Livingstone in his bibliography, but he largely bypasses what they have to say, and is mostly uncritical of Stanley. He also scants the potential richness and depth of Livingstone's story: the way his muted opposition to the colonialism made possible by his very exploring turns him into something of a tragic figure. Why is a book like Dugard's appearing today? Like everything else, books reflect the spirit in the air. And we are living at a time in history when, with startling suddenness, people are talking proudly about the American empire. Those in power in Washington see the world as a clash of civilizations, and are convinced that their civilization has every right to use force to prevail, just as Stanley was convinced that he had every right to burn down African villages that impeded his progress. Perhaps, at this imperial moment, it is not surprising that someone like him is viewed in such a friendly light. Hollywood is already giving us sympathetic and glamorous portrayals of C.I.A. agents in the TV series "The Agency" and in films like "The Recruit." Stanley and Livingstone may be next. ♦

BOOKS

BOTSWANA BLUES

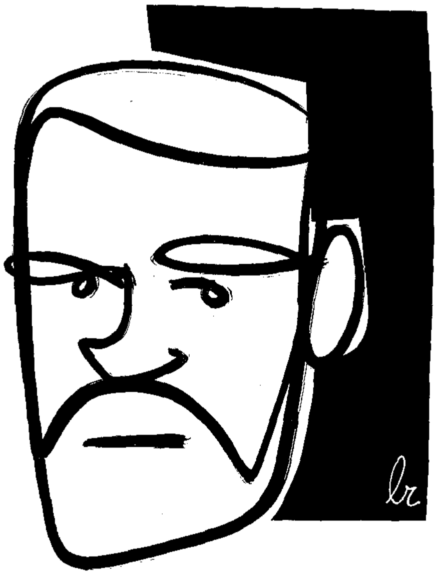
Orgies of talk in Africa.

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Ray Finch, the hero of Norman Rush's lengthy new novel, "Mortals" (Knopf; $26.95), finds many things annoying. A teacher of English at an Anglican school in the southern African nation of Botswana, he harbors frustrated literary ambitions and sardonically reflects, apropos of a huge opus sent to him from San Francisco by his younger brother, Rex, that he is "on the point of being dragged into collaborating with someone seeking the lowest form of literary immortality as established and pioneered by the annoying James Joyce, who thought it would be such a good idea to create puzzle palaces for thousands of specialists to wander around in forever." A contract C.I.A. agent, Ray lets slip that "the sixties annoyed him," explaining:

> The sixties said that if you knocked down certain well-meaning but imperfect institutions you would get something altogether more beautiful and wonderful flowering up to replace them. People never appreciated how touch and go it had been with the Russians at certain points.

A keen Africanophile and linguist, he nevertheless finds it "fucking annoying and unnecessary, the multiplicity of mutually uncomprehending cultures." His brother, who is gay and was his mother's favorite, and who has become a moderately successful Bay Area columnist and has taken to regaling Ray's wife, Iris, with long letters designed, Ray thinks, to lure her away from Africa, deeply annoys him. So does his superior in the C.I.A., "chief of station" Chester Boyle, who in his stuffy secret consulting room displays a multitude of annoying mannerisms; even more annoying is the new arrival in town, Davis Morel, a pale-black American doctor who has a messianic scheme to rid Africa of Christianity and "credulism," and who, on a more practical level, is curing Iris of her hypoadrenia and cystitis. Iris and Ray have been married for seventeen years, and she gives signs of having the seventeen-year itch. This is less surprising to the reader than to Ray, who is perhaps the most annoying hero this reviewer has ever spent seven hundred pages with.



Norman Rush

Ray is a control freak, a fussbudget, a tireless ruminator and annoyance-nurser, and most of his overflowing mental energy goes into an anxious gloating over his happy marriage. He is crazy about his wife, we are reassured over and over: "The fact was that without her the world would be unintelligible to him." Or:

> They were bone to bone, almost. If only his love could travel into her mind physically, by pure resonance in some way, straight in, so she would feel it and know it. Her hair was perfect. Her body was heaven to him, the pastures of heaven, perfection.

O.K., O.K. Happy marriages in real life should be encouraged and celebrated, as basic constituents of a sound society; but in fiction they tend rapidly to cloy. "Mortals" provides many pages of marital discourse, its mutual satisfactions only slightly tinged by intimations of disquiet:

> "I adore you," she said as he got back into bed.
>
> "Thanks."
>
> "I do, Ray. And you're gorgeous."
>
> "I am. Hm. May I call you angel-tits, then?"
>
> "Stop that. But listen to this, before you begin. This is wonderful. The other day when we were talking about why we're so attracted to each other . . ."

There was much of this claustral pillow talk—self-consciousness squared—in Rush's previous, prize-winning novel, "Mating," but there the point of view was that of the nameless female protagonist, a thirty-two-year-old anthropologist engaged in a courtship pursuit of an older, married utopian activist, and this male reader, through whatever kink in his gendered nature, was comfortable with their orgies of talk. (The hero and heroine of "Mating," now Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Denoon, return in this novel, he a decade the worse for wear but she equipped, for the first time, with a name, Karen Ann, née Dooley, which became Hoyt before it became Denoon. She is still "a sturdy specimen, athletic," without makeup but with a "fine, bold face" and a good figure—rather like Iris, in fact. Ray "liked her type.")

In his obsessive dithering over the exact state and direction of his wife's affections, Ray abuses his C.I.A. powers, focussing all his attention on his perceived rival, Morel, while ignoring, against Boyle's orders, a benign agricultural theorist, the Scots-educated Botswana native Samuel Kerekang, who turns out to be the real disturber of the national order. Ray has even enlisted, at the expense of American taxpayers, a spy at Morel's anti-credulism lectures: "Sending in a live asset had been rational, granted that he had been in an irrational state himself over Morel." Ray, frantic with love-worry, heads north, with a driver, into the Kalahari, where trouble has brewed. Just as "Mating" 's most vivid section was the heroine's trek across that desert, "Mortals" takes on spaciousness and breathing room with Iris left behind. She is ever in Ray's thoughts, though, and the viscid complications of his awareness contrive to slow, with insertions of remembered poetry, song, and details of childhood, the persuasively rendered action. A gun battle, on the roof of a splendid abandoned resort hotel, between Kerekang's motley band of rebels and a better-armed group of South African mercenaries who have been summoned, it turns out, by the C.I.A., is a believable hell, as opposed to the hyperbolic one weighing on Ray's mind: "Hell was another man's cock going into your beloved's cunt." But the dreadful reality of these battle scenes is considerably sapped by Ray's bizarre, presumably semi-delirious behavior, involving total nudity and his brother's bulky manuscript duct-taped to his body like a suicide bomb.

Scene after scene tests the reader's own credulism with fantastic juxtapositions—torture and song, fury and innocence—under an African sky of burning sun and blazing stars. The concept of hell, of Hellmouth as an eruption of the world's evil, recurs; Ray, in his English-literature phase, is a specialist in Milton, and Rush's three books (his first, "Whites," is a collection of short stories) all have on their covers pictorial details from Hieronymus Bosch. Boschian grotesqueries energetically cram the canvas of "Mortals," to an effect of comic, rageful tangle. There is a truculent edge to Rush's style; he omitted quotation marks (annoyingly, Joyceanly) in "Mating," and employs them here, but with so many unclosed sets, in prolonged speeches broken into paragraphs, that it takes vigilance to know who is talking.

It is annoying, one could say, that a novel demonstrating so acute, well-stocked, and witty a sensibility is such a trial to read. Individual passages flare up with a visionary economy:

> He walked in a circle around the dying fire. He was still enclosed in the quasi-tent [of netting], carrying it with him like a fool of some kind. He needed to list the options he had for interpreting what she had done to him, putting *Madame Bovary* in his hands. But fire interrupted him, in a bloom of flame declaring itself around him, dragging the breath out of his lungs. The netting had gone up. He had dragged it across an ember. He pitched the burning mass away. He was all right. He was trembling. His hair had gotten singed in back, was all. He had made a spectacle.

In other passages, the story feels impeded by a joyless exactitude. A lecture site:

> A small table and a chair had been set to the left of the lectern, and a chrome steel utility cart had been pushed up against it on the right. The cart bore a display of bouquets obviously recycled from the hospital wards. The centerpiece was a protea in a pot, drooping in a gold foil calyx. A gooseneck microphone was mounted on the lectern, needlessly, considering the dimensions of the room.

An abundance of expository quotation (Rex's gabby, sardonic letters; his epigrammatic, disjointed manuscript; Morel's anti-religion lectures, with counter-arguments by Kerekang) suggests an overflow from some other, less fictional book. As the plot heats up, two characters issue applicable criticisms: Morel explosively tells Ray, "You never shut up, is the problem," and Iris, rejecting Ray's notion that she should have revealed her every impulse, says that "it would have led to a talk opera."

A talk opera is just what Ray likes, and what "Mortals" at bottom is. Even more than love's paradise and Africa's hell, words are what the novelist cares about. In the midst of breaking down a prison wall, Ray coins the word "crackage" and complains, "The working vocabulary of Americans is half what it was in 1950. That is horrifying." His avid marital discourse with Iris is peppered with such questions as "why there was a single term in English for affirmative head movements but for the negative you were forced to use three words . . . why there was no one-word antonym of nod." Iris speaks of "Kleenices" as the plural of "Kleenex" and tells him loftily, "You don't need to convince me you're concupiscent." Ray muses to himself, "Celerity was another one of those perfectly good words destined for the bone pile." In the midst of mayhem on the roof, he finds time to mourn the obsolescence of the word "affray": "Affray was one of those words that was vanishing from the language. The makers of the English language would be appalled, whoever they had been." A little later, he thinks:

> There should be an Académie Anglaise. He wouldn't mind working for that kind of body. He was going to need a job. It would be a job that would let him elevate some of his brother's coinages like *to harbinge* into the dictionary, some dictionary.

Lines of poetry bubble up in Ray's mind at crisis moments (though the only Milton that comes to him is Satan's "Evil, be thou my good") and the most sympathetic character in the novel, Kerekang, is another poetry buff, favoring the Victorians. "Literature is humanity talking to itself, Ray thought."

Are C.I.A. novels literature? I haven't read many, but Rush seems to have the lingo down pretty well, and the little subterfugal tricks. However, Ray's apologetic, I-hate-myself attitude about involvement with the agency seems, after September, 2001, rather dated; instead of being considered too meddlesome and sinisterly omnipotent, the C.I.A. appears to have been, with other national watchdogs, sound asleep at the switch. The events in "Mortals" take place in 1992-93, with the Soviet Union newly collapsed and white rule slowly surrendering in South Africa. Norman Rush, we learn from the note on the author, "with his wife, Elsa . . . lived and worked in Africa from 1978 to 1983," as a member of the Peace Corps. One wonders if, with two novels that total twelve hundred pages, he hasn't got most of what he is going to get out of Botswana. It may be time for Rush to bring his logomania and global perspective back to the United States; his take on cultural developments in the West, as they are forwarded by the American correspondents of our overseas couple, is mordant and lively. Ray sums up the recent history of female unhappiness:

> What was happening was that the general unhappiness of women was turning into a force and developing institutions and mandibles whereas before it had been a kind of background condition like the temperature, as he had thought, something that rose and fell within certain stable limits. . . . What they wanted, he gathered, feeling pleased with himself, was for their own personal rational deliberation to replace what? . . . to replace tradition and custom and instinct, what men called instinct, in arriving at the nine or ten major decisions life presents us with. . . . It was immense, of course, because the only kind of societies the human race had ever been able to build were ones in which half the population was being very accommodating to the other half.

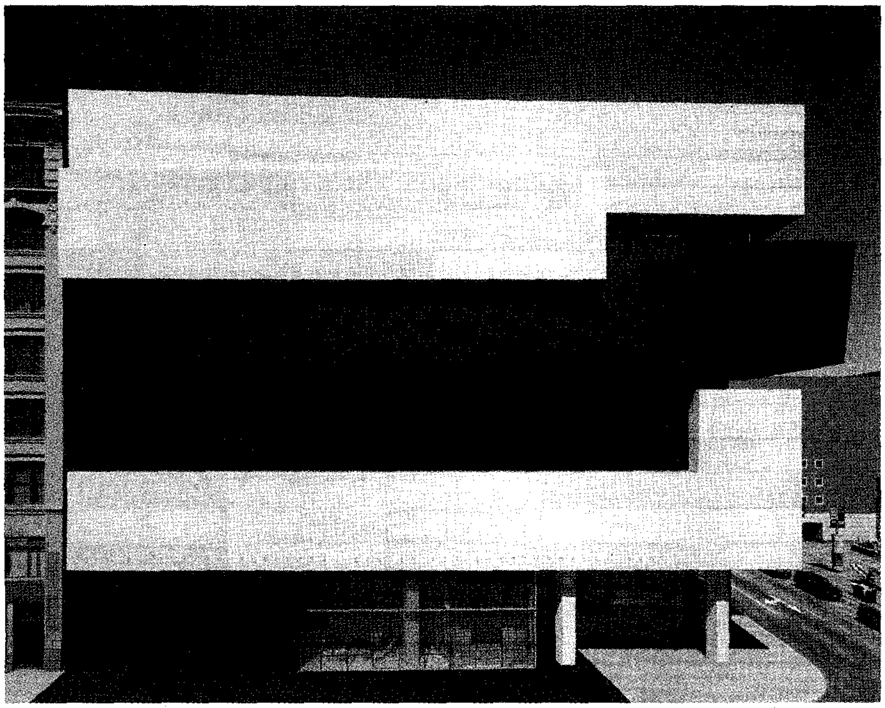
Such an earnest, droll, inclusive anthropology must have needed an African sojourn for its maturation; still, I would be happy to see a Stateside sequel, no longer than, say, "Candide" or "The Great Gatsby," to this (quoting Rush in another context) "unhelpful olla podrida" of a somewhat Miltonian epic. ♦

THE SKY LINE

ARTISTIC LICENSE

Two great new cultural centers open out of town.

BY PAUL GOLDBERGER



The Lois and Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art in Cincinnati.

Zaha Hadid is famous for producing extraordinary drawings of visionary projects, such as a night club in the hills of Hong Kong that looks like a series of broken shards. She is a cultish figure who has built very little of note, save for a fire station in Germany—which was converted into a museum shortly after its completion—and a building designed for a ski jump in Innsbruck, Austria. Hadid was born into a cosmopolitan Iraqi family in Baghdad in 1950. Her father, Muhammad Hadid, was a businessman and a leader of the National Democratic Party, which advocated social democracy and parliamentary reform during the postwar years of the Hashemite monarchy. He had studied at the London School of Economics, and Zaha went to the University of Beirut and did graduate work at the Architectural Association in London, where Rem Koolhaas was her mentor. After working with Koolhaas for several years, she established her own atelier in London.

A medium-sized city in the American heartland is the last place you would expect a Zaha Hadid project to come to fruition, but Cincinnati is about to open her first American building, the new Contemporary Arts Center. The center was founded in 1939 as the Modern Art Society, and for years was run from the basement of the Cincinnati Art Museum. It moved downtown in the nineteen-sixties, and has been making do with galleries over a Walgreen's drugstore. That's where its most famous show took place, in 1990—the "Perfect Moment" exhibition of the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe, which resulted in the arrest of the center's director on obscenity charges, followed by a high-profile trial about artistic freedom, in which he was acquitted.

The Mapplethorpe flap made Cincinnati look like a redneck hotbed, but it has always had a fairly progressive arts community, and the Contemporary Arts Center, under the leadership of Charles Desmarais, who took over in 1995, grew so steadily that its mediocre galleries became an embarrassment. The board decided to build a real museum, and a committee led by Richard Rosenthal, the primary patron of the new building (it is officially the Lois and Richard Rosenthal Center), conducted an international search that was narrowed down to Bernard Tschumi, Daniel Libeskind, and Hadid. The committee chose Hadid, Desmarais says, "because she has a real understanding of the contemporary art world and what we are trying to accomplish." It probably doesn't hurt that her building puts the center on the international-architecture star map.

Hadid's first designs, which were shown in 1998, were conceptually heavy and were difficult to understand except as a series of fragmented, disconnected masses floating in space. It was easy, back then, to wonder if Cincinnati, in its eagerness to embrace the avant-garde, would be willing to challenge its architect to stay within the bounds of reality. I remember thinking that Hadid might have sold the museum a bill of experimental goods. But Desmarais, Rosenthal, and their colleagues turned out to be clients of quiet, firm sophistication, and Hadid performed with considerable flexibility and great sensitivity. The result is a spectacular building. Hadid uses architecture as a way of enlivening the street and creating an incentive for entering the building, and then she lets the architecture recede in stages, from the street through the lobby into the galleries. We have become accustomed to the notion that architecture can be an energizing factor in the experience of museum-going, but Hadid knew when to turn down the voltage. The galleries feel more like loft areas of varying sizes and ceiling heights than like aggressively sculpted spaces. They are not sublime, as are the rooms Tadao Ando designed for the new Modern Art Museum in Fort Worth, but, even though they don't offer enough space for enormous sculptural pieces or monumental canvases—this is not going to be where Richard Serra shows his major work, or Anselm Kiefer mounts a show—it is easy to imagine them displaying a wide range of contemporary art.

The limited size of the galleries isn't so much Hadid's doing as the result of the decision to situate the new building in the heart of downtown Cincinnati, a block from Fountain Square, the city's main public space. (Cincinnati has a real downtown, where people walk on the streets.) But a tight site on a major urban corner turns out to have inspired Hadid, not confined her. From the outside, the building looks like a mixture of concrete and black aluminum boxes that float over a glass-enclosed base. (Imagine the façade of the Whitney Museum broken into pieces and reshuffled.) This is a virtuoso composition, in which the masses hover in graceful counterpoint to one another. And, like very few other modern buildings, the Contemporary Arts Center addresses the corner—more confidently and ingeniously than any building since Paul Rudolph's Art and Architecture Building at Yale, which was finished forty years ago. Hadid wants her building to embrace the city, not to defy it, and to that end she designed the sidewalk as a concrete plane that continues into the building as the lobby floor, then curves upward and becomes the back wall. She calls this the "urban carpet," and, while it is not the most successful element of the building, it underscores her determination to present the arts center as inseparable from the streetscape.

Hadid has managed to give the building a hint of formal, institutional grandeur without making it feel formal or institutional. It is reminiscent of the work of Rudolph; of Marcel Breuer, who designed the Whitney; and of Edward Larrabee Barnes's Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Hadid's real love is composition, and it is impossible to look at her building and not think also of Malevich, and of El Lissitzky and the other Russian Constructivists who sought a new, grandly asymmetrical modernist order. They are her true forebears, yet Hadid does not, like some architects today, approach early-modern architecture with sentimental nostalgia. She is interested in making something of her own, using a language that connects her to the early modernists who inspired her.

The arts center in Cincinnati suggests that Hadid is a better maker of façades than of space. I don't think there is a single room inside that provides quite the pleasure that the public faces of this building bring to downtown Cincinnati. What comes closest is the remarkable center stairway, which zigzags up through the building against the backdrop of the concrete "urban carpet." The stairway is made up of long runs of steel beams, painted black, and it looks almost like a series of huge gangplanks that switch back and forth. This is one building in which no one should take the elevator unless he has to.

The Contemporary Arts Center ought to stifle doubts about Zaha Hadid's work being either buildable or workable. This has been built, and it works. My greatest worry, in fact, is that Hadid will now be perceived as something of a sheep in wolf's clothing—as a gentler, easier architect than she was supposed to be. You do not have to redefine the idea of what a building is, or of what space is, to understand this building, but your ideas will be stretched. Hadid is expanding the notions of interpenetrating space and geometric composition that have preoccupied modernist architects for more than a hundred years.

With buildings by Peter Eisenman in Columbus and Cincinnati, and by Frank Gehry in Toledo, Cincinnati, and Cleveland, the state of Ohio is beginning to seem as hospitable to cutting-edge architecture as the Netherlands. But avant-garde architects are getting commissions from small cities and institutions all over the country, not only because such places are eager to use architecture as a way of establishing their cultural credentials. Smaller cities are less likely to be encumbered by the political and economic pressures that affect projects in big cities, and, these days, they are more likely to take risks. Hadid is designing a new museum in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, as an addition to Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Tower, which has been turned into a hotel and arts complex. And at Bard College, a hundred and twenty miles up the Hudson from New York City, Gehry's first major public building on the East Coast, the Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, has just opened. At a time when

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3 LITTLE PIGS
Maslin

"HE WAS HUFFING AND HE WAS PUFFING
AND THEN HE STARTED SNORING."

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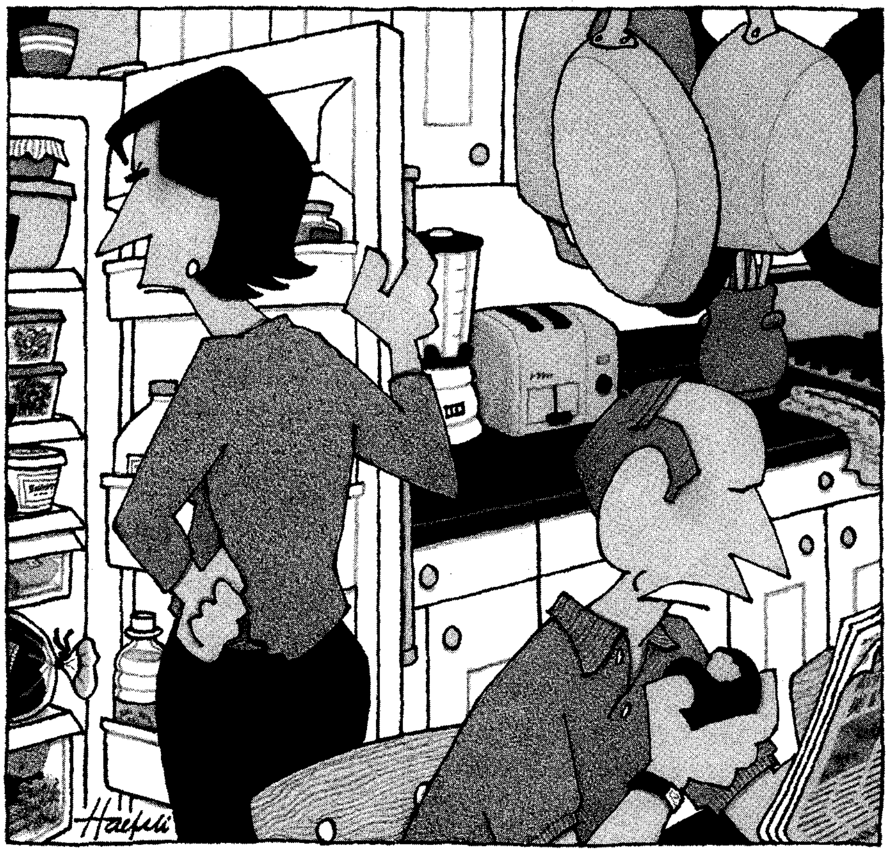
New York is mired in bureaucratic uncertainty over what to do with the banal buildings of Lincoln Center (and when Gehry has not been able to get anything of his built anywhere in the city, despite several proposals), Bard, under the leadership of Leon Botstein, has ended up with what may be the best small concert hall in the United States.

The building, which is set on a bucolic site of rolling, grassy hills close to the Hudson River, contains a nine-hundred-seat hall suitable for an orchestra, chamber music, or full-scale opera productions; a two-hundred-seat "black box" theatre; and four rehearsal halls. It is clad in the curving metal panels characteristic of Gehry's recent architecture, but it is actually a simple set of boxes. There is no pretense that the powerful shapes are anything other than decoration. From the start, the design was determined by acoustical needs, which required a fairly conventionally shaped auditorium, and by the tightness of the budget. But, just as Zaha Hadid responded creatively to the restrictions of building on a city corner, Gehry has been stirred to brilliance by things that might have frustrated him. The undulating surfaces of stainless steel (not the more expensive titanium of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao) swaddle the boxes, protecting them and at the same time raising them to monumental grandeur. The swooping forms stretch out far beyond the auditorium on three sides and create a profile for the building that gently echoes the Catskill Mountains in the distance, across the Hudson. From within, they define powerful lobby spaces and raw, almost industrial rooms that repeat the complex shape of the roofline. Within the auditorium, which has concrete walls and wood details, the task of providing a sensual experience is left largely to the music. (The sound, crafted by the acoustician Yasuhisa Toyota, has an exceptionally crisp brilliance.) In a sense, the relationship between the exterior, the lobbies, and the auditorium in Gehry's building parallels that of the exterior and interior of Hadid's arts center in Cincinnati. The architecture pulls you in and then steps back, as it were. The architect defers to other artists.

It is interesting to see how Gehry's voluptuous metal forms, which always seem so right in the middle of a city, are even more dramatic in a grassy meadow. The roof hovers over the main mass of the building with nearly perfect symmetry, as if the hall were a great country house or a classical villa. In the rear, it all falls away, and the building turns into a set of plain white stucco boxes. This is one of the best things about the building, and not because it represents architectural honesty or some such nonsense. Gehry's work, despite the consistency with which it expresses the priorities of architecture—space-making, responsiveness to a functional program, connections to a particular site—is often misunderstood as primarily sculptural. But when you have what is obviously a fancy front and an ordinary back, not to mention a box in the middle, it is hard to interpret a building as anything but a building.

The Fisher Center reminds me of another great academic building for the public consumption of culture, Louis Kahn's Yale Art Gallery, which opened in 1953. The Kahn building is also somewhat hard-edged, and uses a lot of concrete, but it is nimble in a way that bespeaks both love of art and a determination to see it clearly, free of heavy-handed trappings. The Yale Art Gallery was the first great postwar modern museum, and Gehry's Fisher Center is the first great concert hall of our time. Neither one of them is the largest or the most spectacular building of its kind, but each is the freshest and the most reverent. ♦



"I don't care if everyone else is getting one—we are not buying a refrigerator with a learning curve."

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DEPT. OF RECIDIVISM

From the Times.

If any proof is needed to show that baseball can be salutary, you have only to remember that Ron LeFlore, the former Detroit Tigers center fielder, was discovered by Manager Billy Martin in Jackson State Penitentiary in Michigan, where Mr. LeFlore was serving time for armed robbery and playing baseball on prison teams. After his release, Mr. LeFlore made his major league debut in 1974 and over his career led the American and National Leagues in stolen bases.

THE CURRENT CINEMA

IN THE BASEMENT

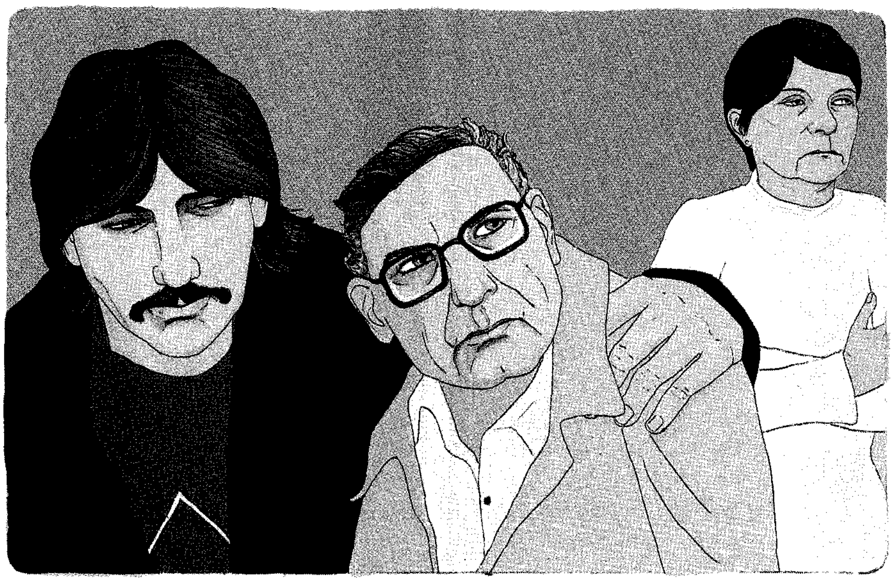
"Capturing the Friedmans."

BY DAVID DENBY

"Capturing the Friedmans," an extraordinary new documentary directed by Andrew Jarecki, is both a meditation on perversion and truth and one of the most heartbreaking films ever made about an American family. Baldly stated, the facts at the center of the movie are these: in 1987, in Great Neck, Long Island, Arnold Friedman, a retired schoolteacher in his fifties who taught computer classes for kids in his home basement, and his youngest son, Jesse, then eighteen, were arrested and charged with committing repeated acts of sexual abuse on boys who attended the classes. Despite its sensational subject, the picture has been made with tact, dedication, and respect for the unending mysteries of family life. For the five Friedmans (father, mother, and three sons), their sense of themselves as a family was central to what was at stake for them as individuals during the crisis. "I'm a Friedman, therefore I am" might have been their slogan, for they rise and fall as a loving and then suffering brood.

Jarecki's movie owes its existence, it turns out, to the Friedmans' habit of memorializing themselves in films, tapes, and photographs. The audience searches for clues to the catastrophe in the successive layers of technology: there's eight-millimetre footage of Arnold Friedman as an ebullient little boy, then photographs of him as a young musician, passing himself off in the Catskills as "Arnito Rey," Latin bandleader; and then, later, more films and stills of him as an honored schoolteacher and a happy father—a round-shouldered, middle-aged man with glasses and a bemused expression. A lot of the footage shows Arnold and his three sons (David, Seth, and Jesse) horsing around—clowning in crazy costumes, putting on mock playlets, interviewing one another. The nagging hilarity, reminiscent of the Marx Brothers' delirious shenanigans, was a bond among them as strong as steel. Arnold's wife, Elaine, however, does not appear to be in on the jokes. A reserved, put-upon woman, she resists the constant pranks as well as the cameras whirring away in her house. Her slogan might be "I'm a Friedman, therefore I struggle to exist."

The three boys, then in their late teens and early twenties, were home for the Thanksgiving holiday when the unimaginable happened. The police busted in, searched the basement, and found a stack of child-pornography magazines. It seems that the Nassau County authorities had been tipped off by postal inspectors, who had been monitoring Arnold's mail. The police then interviewed the children who attended the computer classes—boys reportedly ranging in age from seven to twelve—and a collective tale of violation emerged. Jarecki gives us enough of the local TV news and tabloid coverage to bring back the scandal in all its dismaying squalor. But his real interest is in the memory of each person—including policemen, defense and prosecuting attorneys, and court officials—as it has been shaped over the years in the telling and the retelling. The movie is a stunning demonstration of the subjectivity of recollection. Not even "Rashomon" itself is more ambiguous or many-sided.



A new documentary looks at crime, truth, and the mysteries of family life.

All through the arrests and trials, the oldest son, David, made videotapes, which play a central role in the movie. Of the three boys, David was perhaps the closest to his father—the one who drew most directly on his father's humor and love of imposture. As an adult, he became a successful professional clown, an entertainer at family parties in Manhattan. We see him in 1988, during the trials, taping himself as he sits on his bed in his underwear, pouring out his rage and bewilderment to the camera. "If you're not me, you're not supposed to be watching this," he says. But why make the video if there was not an intention to tell the family story somewhere, someday? David is a showman, an ironic entertainer. He also videotaped family dinners, a Seder, conversations in the kitchen and the car. He recorded the scenes not only to tell the story but also, perhaps, to assert some measure of control as the family fell apart under pressure from the police and the community. And he may have wanted to capture what he considered a betrayal: the refusal of his mother to support her husband (who pleaded guilty on some counts) and then her insistence that Jesse, who claimed innocence, plead guilty, too, so as to avoid the maximum sentence. Interviewed in the present, David, sad-eyed and vengeful, loyal to his father, is still living the torment of the family breakup—living it every time he goes out to entertain children as a clown.

What's astonishing about the videos is that they turn from comedy to tragedy and then back again. Even on the day Jesse is given a sentence of six to eighteen years in prison, the boys are larking together—an act of solidarity which a police officer in the case, years later, takes as a sign that Jesse lacked remorse. (It doesn't occur to him that the joking might have been a defiant protestation of innocence.) Within the family, there are taunts and threats as well as jokes: at dinner, all three boys gang up on Elaine while Arnold sits quietly and begs them in a whisper to desist. The boys, clinging desperately to the illusion of the Friedmans' family health, refuse to believe that their dad is guilty, and he refuses to speak. The entire fantastic mess unfolds before our eyes with the power of some appalling Biblical story or one of the bloodier Greek myths—the House of Atreus reincarnated as a middle-class Jewish family in Great Neck.

Jarecki and the film's editor, Richard Hankin, shift back and forth in time, intercutting contemporary interviews with family footage and trial records. In the end, the filmmakers capture the Friedmans but not, alas, the truth, which keeps slipping into the distance like a silvery fish; it quivers and flashes, but we can't quite see it in its entirety. Arnold Friedman, we find out, was certainly a pedophile—there were previous instances of molestation that he admitted to. But what happened in the basement? A man sitting with his face in the dark insists that he was raped years earlier. Another man, photographed in closeup, fully lit, says that nothing happened at all. Back in 1987 and 1988, the police put the case together from the discovery of the pornographic magazines and the testimony of the children. But there wasn't any physical evidence—no semen or blood on the children's clothes, no bruises, no complaints at the time from the kids, some of whom had, before the arrests, enrolled for another round of classes. Were the charges exaggerated? Completely false? The investigative journalist Debbie Nathan talks of hysteria, panic, group pressures. One parent says he was urged by other parents to get his kid to confess. And yet the police, the prosecutors, and the judge, interviewed now, come off as cautious and temperate people. After watching the movie, audiences will debate for hours about who is telling the truth, who is telling a half-truth, and who wants to believe so passionately in something false that it becomes a vivid memory to be defended against every hint of doubt.

Seth Friedman chose not to be interviewed for the film. Jesse served thirteen years and now, ravaged in appearance, is a free man. Arnold, sentenced to ten to thirty years, died in prison; the death itself is part of a generous gesture that becomes one of the many revelations offered late in the film. Yet Arnold remains a cipher, a guilty man hounded by the rival furies of shameful desire and family responsibility. In the end, his wife was one of his principal victims. Now in her seventies, Elaine talks of her bewilderment, of her distance from her husband, of being lied to. Touched, we try to imagine the unbearable solitude of her married life. "Capturing the Friedmans" reaffirms the family as the inescapable cauldron of great drama—as the birthplace and feeding ground of the most powerful emotions, including perverse sexual desire, and as the site of reconciliation and solace, too.

Andrew Jarecki started out as a musician and was the founder of Moviefone, which he sold to America Online in 1999. "Capturing the Friedmans," made with assistance from HBO and many angels, is his first feature-length film, a work that nevertheless demonstrates the audacity, the evenhandedness, the sense of detail and structural power worthy of such accomplished documentary filmmakers as Marcel Ophuls and Frederick Wiseman. I'm not sure how Jarecki is going to top "Capturing the Friedmans." To begin your career with a masterpiece is so remarkable a feat that one can only hope Jarecki finds another subject as rich as this family, which was obsessed with itself but needed a filmmaker to begin to see itself at all. ♦

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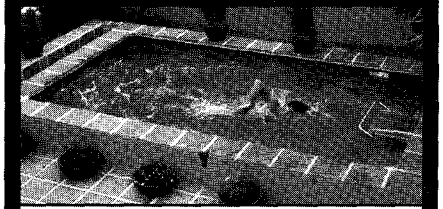

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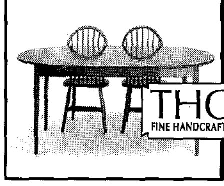

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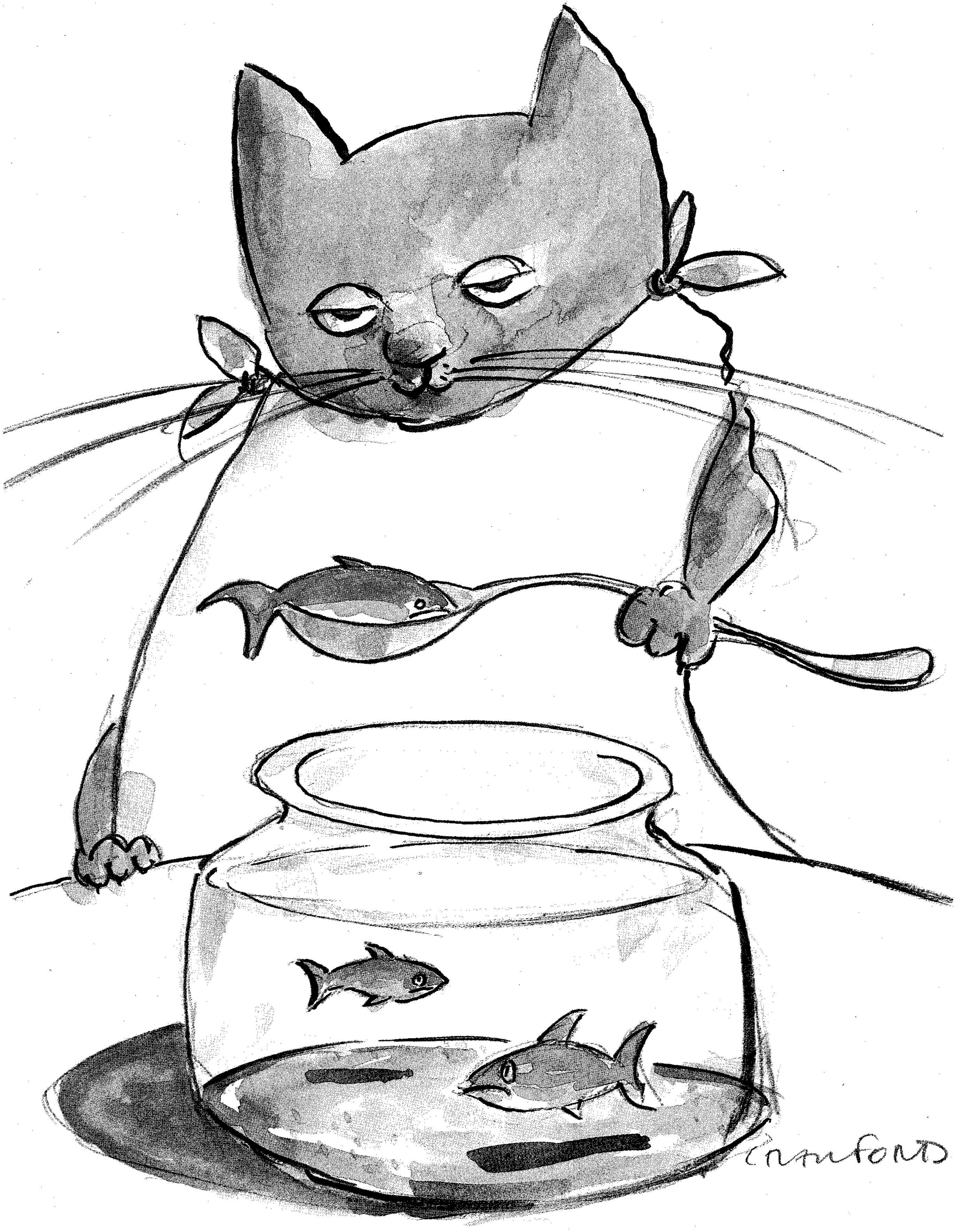

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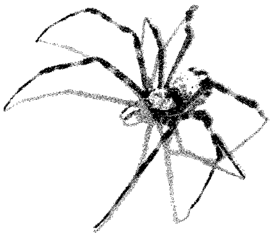

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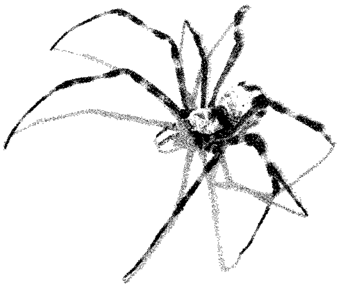

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